IMPRIMATUR.

Carolus Alſton, R. P. D. Hen. Epiſc. Lond. à Sacris.

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A Stop to the course of Separation:

OR, THE

SEPARATION

OF THE

New Separatists

FROM THE

PARISH-CHURCHES CONDEMNED,

By a sober Answer to the chief Pleas for this disorderly practice.

Wherein is discovered how *contrary it is*,

I. To the *Holy Scriptures*.

II. To the Reason of the thing.

III. To the judgment of the *Old Nonconformists*.

IV. To Themselves *heretofore*.

Let us follow after the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edifie another.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth, Rom. 14. v. 19, 22.

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TO THE READER.

Chriſtian Reader.

IT is not a vain humour of ſcribling, nor an affectation of being an Author, which creates thee the trouble of theſe Papers, but that great ſenſe I have of the manifold evils of Separation, which are as deſtructive to the Church of Chriſt, as tearing one member from another is to the natural body. And ſince the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles commands us to have ſuch a fellow-feeling of the ſufferings of the Chriſtian Church, the Myſtical body of Chriſt, whereof we are members, as the members of the natural body have of each others ſufferings, I ſhould fear whether I were a living member of Chriſt's body, had I not ſome ſmart re-

ſentments of theſe rents and diviſions which are daily made in it. And ſince there are thoſe who are very buſie in juſtifying and widening theſe diviſions, ſurely it can be no fault to oppoſe my ſelf to that growing evil; an attempt, which if it want ſucceſs, yet may merit a favourable cenſure. It is well known how our ancient Nonconformiſts, though they ſcrupled the uſe of ſome Ceremonies then, and ſtill enjoyned and practiſed in our Church, yet did both by their Writings and practice, condemn Separation from our Pariſh Churches: This hath been juſtly urged againſt the Separation of ſome among us, who ſtill pretend to be the Succeſſors of thoſe Peaceable *and* Conformable Diſſenters, *and take it very ill to be ranked among Brownists and Independents, becauſe forſooth they diſown their principles, though they eſpouſe their practices.*

And therefore to vindicate themſelves in this point, and that they might not be thought Apoſtates from thoſe

those principles they have ſo vehemently contended and fought for, and that they may avoid the force of thoſe killing Arguments the ancient Puritans urged againſt the Brownists of thoſe days, they have endeavoured to find out a vaſt difference between the ſtate of the Church now, and what it was in thoſe days.

The deſign therefore of theſe Papers is to conſider all thoſe pretended differences between the preſent ſtate of our Church, and what it was in the days of the old Nonconformiſts; and if it appear there is no material difference (of which I leave the Reader to be judge) it muſt then neceſſarily follow by their own Conceſſions, that they are as downright Sciſmaticks, as the ancient Brownists and our preſent Independents are.

This I have endeavoured to examine with Chriſtian candor and impartiality, and without any other ſharpneſs of ſtile, than what the ſharpneſs of an Argument gives it. I beſeech thee,

Reader,

To the Reader.

Reader to consider it with all due candor and impartiality, and joyn thy prayers to mine, That God would at length restore peace and unity to his Church.

Farewel.

A SOBER ANSWER TO THE *MAIN ARGUMENTS* Of the New Separatiſts from the *Pariſh-Churches*, to ſtop the Courſe of their deſtructive *Separation*.

Argument I.

Such Miniſters as the Scriptures command us to Avoid, and have No company with, nor ſo much as Eat with, are not to be joyn'd with in Church-Communion as our Paſtors; But thoſe that by ſubſcription, and open declaration to the Church in their Miniſtery, do abſolve all the perſons in the Three Kingdoms from

the obligation of Reformation, in caſe of very great Church-corruptions, and juſtifie them all from the guilt of perjury, are ſuch. Ergo.

Anſ. 1. BY thoſe Scripture-Precepts to Turn from, Avoid, and Not eat with the wicked; 'Tis manifeſt, ſaith *Grotius*, No act is ſignified greater than a private one; For what is the Church here bid to do, but what a Diſciple doth, when he deſerteth an Evil Doctor; or honeſt men do, when they renounce the friendſhip or ſociety of their Companions fallen into wickedneſs.

Grotius *Right of higheſt power.*

Doctor *Hammond* alſo interpreteth the Apoſtles prohibition of the *Corinthians* to eat with wicked Church-Members, to be meant of intimate familiarity with them; ſo doth the Engliſh Annotators.

Annot. upon 1 Cor. 5. 11.

Object. But they will ſay, If a man may not hold Civil Communion with ſuch, much leſs may he hold Church-Communion.

Anſw. This Inference the Separatiſts made in *Calvin*'s days. Take it in his own words, "Here (ſaith he) they cry out, "if it be not lawful to eat common "bread, how may it be lawful to eat "the bread of the Lord. To which he anſwereth. "Whereas they think it Sa-

Calvin's *Inſtit.* p. 343.

"criledge

" criledge to be partakers of the Lord's " bread with them, ſpeaking of wicked " men, they are therein much more rigo- " rous than *Paul*; for where he exhorteth " us to a holy and pure partaking, he " requireth not that one ſhould examine " another, or every one the whole Church, " but each man himſelf; whereby he " ſheweth that the company of wicked " men at the Lord's Table do not hurt " the godly; He that eateth unworthi- " ly, eateth judgment to *himſelf*, not to " *others*.

Then again he ſaith, " It is not in the " power of private perſons to determine " the Communicants at the Lord's Table; " they have not the judgment of Office. Cal. *Inſt.* *lib.* 4. *p.* 343.

Again, " I do indeed, ſaith he, not " deny, That it is the doing of a godly " man, to withdraw himſelf from all pri- " vate company of evil men, to have no " willing familiarity with them. But it " is one thing to flee the company of Evil " men, and another thing, for hatred of " them, to flee the communion of the " Church.

To be ſhort, ſince it is in the power of private perſons, to chooſe who they will ordinarily, and frequently converſe with at their own Table and in common Converſation, but not at the Lord's: and

ſecondly, That doing their own duty, they are in no danger of being hurt by the wickedneſs of Communicants at the Lord's Table: and *thirdly*, That experience proveth familiar Converſation with wicked men to be extreme dangerous: it followeth that men may lawfully hold Church-Communion, where they may not hold Civil.

Pſal. 106. 35.

2. But if the Scripture-precepts, to Withdraw from, Avoid, and not Eat with the Wicked, may poſſibly be extended to Church-communion, which I do believe; Then *ſuo ordine*, to every one in their own order and place; for God is the God of order, and not of confuſion. As they reſpect the Governours of the Church, they call upon them for the inflicting of Church-Cenſures: As they reſpect the People, they put them upon minding their Officers of their duty, and call for their own concurrence with them therein; but not to ſeparation, if that be neglected.

The Brethren ſhould diſtinguiſh between an *Orderly Motion* of the Church-Members in their ſeveral capacities to the putting bad Miniſters and People out of the Church: And a *Diſorderly Commotion* by the irregular withdrawing and ſeparating of a Party *from* the Church. Perhaps the firſt may be inferr'd from thoſe

thoſe prohibitions, to Eat with the wicked; but the laſt, which is the practical Inference of the Brethren, is abſurd, becauſe it cannot be done without culpable Schiſm, and threatning the ruin of the whole, by cutting the Church into ſhreds, and dividing the houſe of Chriſt within it ſelf, which whenſoever it falleth out, Chriſt ſaith, That houſe cannot ſtand. *Matth.* 12. 25.

3. If it were no ſin to hold Communion with Prieſts, ſons of *Belial*, that knew not the Lord; then ſurely it is no ſin to maintain Communion with Paſtors, though guilty of as bad crimes as thoſe mentioned in the Argument of the Brethren: But it was no ſin to hold Communion with *Hophni* and *Phineas*, the two Sons of *Eli*, being Prieſts: notwithſtanding the enormous wickneſs of thoſe men, we find no Precept to the People to diſown Church-Communion with them, ſo long as they ſtood legally poſſeſt of the Prieſt's Office; but on the contrary, the People that took the ſcandal, and began to abhor the Ordinances for their ſake, are called tranſgreſſors, 1 *Sam.* 2. 24.

The wicked Scribes and Phariſees, though our Saviour told the People they were covetous Hypocrites, blind Guides, ſuperſtitious, making void the Commandments of God by their own Traditions; *Matth.* 23. 23, 24, 25. 33.

such as without Repentance could not escape the damnation of hell: Yet for that they sat in *Moses*'s Chair teaching the Law, Christ not only alloweth, but commandeth the People to hear them. And Mr. *Norton* of *New-England* teacheth, That his Precept to hear them, importeth full Church-Communion with them. It is therefore no sin, but a duty (as the case may be) to hold Communion with Ministers guilty of as bad crimes as the Brethren insinuate the Parish-Ministers to be guilty of.

Matth. 23. 2.

Personal crimes in allowed publick Ministers will not justifie disowning them in Church-Administrations; and all that is affirmed in the Brethrens Argument against the publick Ministers, are but personal crimes: So that though all were true which is alledged against them, it would not thence follow, that it were a sin to joyn in Church Communion with them, as Pastors. To this purpose *Calvin*.

Calv. Inst. lib. 4. *p.* 439.

"Nothing is added or diminished by "the worthiness or unworthiness of him "by whom the Sacraments are deliver-"ed; and even as among men, if a Let-"ter be sent, so the hand and seal be "known, it maketh no matter what man-"ner of man be the Carrier. Even so it "ought

"ought to ſuffice us, to know the hand "and ſeal of the Lord in his Sacraments, "by what Carrier ſoever they be brought. "Hereby, ſaith he, the Error of the "Donatiſts is well confuted, which mea-"ſured the force and value of the Sacra-"ment, by the worthineſs of the Mi-"niſters. It nothing hindred the Jews "to be circumciſed of unclean Prieſts or "Apoſtates.

4. The grievous crimes charged in the Minor, upon One and All the publick Miniſters, are only confidently aſſerted; not proved, nor any thing ſaid in order thereunto; therefore may juſtly be neglected.

5. If we ſhould never have communions with Paſtors, that one party or other have not charged with the like crimes, we ſhould never have held communion with any in *England* for many years. I am grieved to ſpeak it: For as the preſent Conformiſts, for abjuring the Covenant, are now called perjured perſons by the offended Brethren, becauſe they renounced the Covenant: So were the Non-Conformiſts themſelves called perjured perſons by the Conformiſts heretofore, becauſe they took the Solemn League and Covenant, being in their judgements croſs to divers Oaths formerly

taken by multitudes of themſelves, particularly the Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Canonical Obedience.

6. Very wiſe and conſcientious men think, the Subſcriptions and open Declarations the Objection ſpeaketh of, doth not hinder the uſe of any *Moral* Endeavours of Reformation *in* the Government, but only *ſeditious* Endeavours of Extirpation *of* the Government now eſtabliſh'd by Law. And if the Solemn League and Covenant, heretofore taken, bound men to uſe any *ſuch* Endeavours, to deſtroy the publick Eſtabliſhment then in being, or now re-eſtabliſhed, it ought to be repented of, and not ſtood to, except Sedition and Rebellion be no ſin. The Brethren ſhould diſtinguiſh upon the obligation from the Solemn League and Covenant; 1. As it contain'd a new obligation to do ſome things which we are all bound to, if we had never taken it; namely, in our places and callings, to endeavour Church-Reformation, according to the word of God. Now, in this ſence, no body is enjoyned to declare againſt it, which the Objectors do not conſider. But only in the ſecond place, as it containeth an obligation in our Places and Callings, and with our Lives and Fortunes to endeavour the extirpation of Church-

Church-government by Arch-biſhops, and Biſhops, &c. and by this means to overthrow our fixed Eccleſiaſtical State, to root out the Government eſtabliſhed by Law, which 1. The King took his Oath to maintain, at his Coronation; 2. The Government confirmed by *Magna Charta*, and by thirty Parliaments; 3. And that enjoyned and taken without the King's conſent: for the Covenant ſaith not we ſhall endeavour to root out Prelacy [If the King will give leave:] Nay 4. Contrary to the King's Proclamation, *October* 9. 1643. wherein he admoniſheth his Subjects to beware of it, and prohibiteth them to take it upon their Oaths of Allegiance, ſaying, that whatever the pretences of it were, it was in truth nothing but a traiterous ſeditious Combination againſt him, and the eſtabliſh'd Religion, and Laws of the Kingdom: 5. A Government which *Grotius* telleth us is repugnant to no Law Divine, but it is approved by Divine Law, That the univerſal Church hath received it, That this Prelacy hath its pattern in the Law Natural and Moſaical, and had its beginning in the Apoſtolical times; and that the hiſtory of all times proclaimeth the many commodities that have come to the Church by it: And which wiſe

Grotius *Right of higheſt power.*

wiſe *Fregivil*, a man of a deep head, as Biſhop *Hall* calleth him, ſpeaking particularly of the Engliſh Prelacy, ſaith, it is grounded on God's word; and that in ſuch a mighty Church, as the Church of *England* is, the *State* of the Church ought to be preſerved; for Equality, he ſaith, will be hurtful to the State, and in time breed confuſion. A Government which *Calvin* commendeth to the King of *Poland*, that for order ſake in ſo great a Kingdom, he adviſeth the King to eſtabliſh Biſhops in every Province, and over them an Archbiſhop and Primate.

Calvin's *Epiſt. ad Reg. Pol.* p.140,141.

Zanchy ſaith, "He that will receive "and follow the uſe and the opinion of "the Univerſal Church, in all times and "places unto this age; for a certain In"terpreter of God's word, will eaſily un"derſtand, that the ſeveral degrees of "Prieſts and Biſhops, in the Eccleſiaſti"cal Government, are, and ever were, "according to God's Word: therefore "where they ſtand ſtill, they muſt not "be aboliſhed; and where the contrarie"ty of times hath aboliſhed them, and "not ſuffered them, they muſt be ſet up "again. And that with *Calvin* he ſaith, "They are worthy of any execration "that will not ſubmit themſelves to that "Hierarchy that ſubmitteth it ſelf to the "Lord Jeſus. Again,

Zanch. *Theſ. de vera Reformandarum Eccleſiarum ratione.*

Again, this is his Proteſtation, "That "before God, and in his conſcience, he "held them all for no better than Schiſ- "maticks, that ſet this down, as a part "of the Reformation of Churches, to "have no Biſhops, that have any Emi- "nence of degree and Authority, above "their true fellow Prieſts, where they "may well be had.

Du Moulin alſo telleth us: "That "the Superiority of the Engliſh Biſhops "hath been approved by the moſt wor- "thy Paſtors of the French Churches. "That it was neceſſity, not any Theo- "logical deciſion, made *France* a Church "without Biſhops. *Buckler of Faith upon the Article of the French Confeſſion.*

Martin Bucer, for the weal of the Church of *England*, he being to aſſiſt in the work of Reformation, "We muſt en- "deavour, ſaith he, that all the manner "and diſtribution of Eccleſiaſtical Go- "vernment, which the Canons preſcri- "bed to Biſhops and Metropolitanes, be "reſtored and maintained. Bucer. *Tract. de Reformanda Eccleſ. Tom.* 2.

Likewiſe *Beza* declared his diſlike of thoſe that reſiſted Epiſcopal power, where it was eſtabliſhed. He exhorteth ſome diſſenting Brethren in *England*, That leaving all bitterneſs they ſhould obey the Queen, and all the Prelates with a free heart; and called it ſelf-conceited pride Beza's *Epiſtle to the Brethren of the Engliſh Church.*

pride in them that rejected their Authority.

S. *Jerome* telleth us, "That it was "decreed all the world over, that One "choſen from among the Presbyters "ſhould *ſet over the reſt*, to whom *all* "the Care of the Church ſhould pertain. Further ſaith, "The Churches ſafety "conſiſteth in the dignity of the chief "Prieſt, that is, the Biſhop, to whom if "there be not given a *Superior power* "over all the reſt, there will be made "ſo many Schiſms in the Church, as "there be Prieſts. It ſeemeth then in his time, that Experience had prompted all Chriſtian Nations to ſet up Prelacy in the Church: and that not only a Prelacy of *Place*, but *Power*, as that which was for the good of the Church. And *Grotius* telleth us, that whoſoever ſhall affirm Epiſcopal Eminence to be unlawful, charge the Church in all Ages, not only with folly, but impiety.

Right of higheſt power.

Mr. *Baxter* telleth us alſo, 'That E-'piſcopacy was no ſuch upſtart thing, nor 'defended by ſuch contemptible reaſons, 'as that the Controverſie is like to die 'with this Age; undoubtedly there will 'be a learned and godly party for it 'while the world endureth. And in another place, 'That ſome of the Prelates 'were

Baxter *of Church-Government, p.* 300.

'were venerable for their admirable 'Learning and piety, and that Prelacy 'had not a few mean perſons to adorn 'and credit it.

What a prodigious error then, and evil was it (all theſe things conſidered,) to enter into a ſolemn League and Covenant, without any more ado, (not ſo much as conſulting the Biſhops) to extirpate the very Government it ſelf, to introduce we knew not what in the room, as experience quickly proved.

Three things are neceſſary, ſaith learned Biſhop *Bramhall*, to make a publick Reformation lawful, *Juſt Grounds*, *Due Moderation*, *Sufficient Authority*. There may be Juſt Grounds without Sufficient Authority, and ſufficient Authority without Juſt Grounds; and both ſufficient Authority, and Juſt Grounds, without due Moderation. But he ſaith, they are all neceſſary to concur to make a publick Reformation *lawful*: But the Reformation deſigned by the Scotch Covenant, to root out Prelacy, had none of all theſe three Ingredients of a lawful Reformation in it; neither Juſt Grounds, Due Moderation, nor Lawful Authority; and therefore the Covenant to effect ſuch a Reformation muſt needs be unlawful.

Biſhop Bramhall Schiſm p. 114.

To

To sum up all then, 1. Here was no *Just Grounds* to take such a Covenant; because for National Churches, where are Kings at head of them, it is not only a lawful, but the *best* Government, in the judgment of the wisest and greatest Students of Divinity in the whole world.

2. As there was no good grounds to take it, so there was no *Due Moderation* in the taking of it; for that the Bishops, whose interest both for themselves and the Church was deeply concern'd, were never call'd to a free debate upon it; so that it was *unjust*, *uncharitable*, and *disingenuous*.

Kings Declaration Octob. 9. 1643.

3. There was no *Sufficient Authority* to *impose it*, because the King, whom the Brethren by their Oath of Supremacy had acknowledged, was within his Dominions supreme in all Ecclesiastical Causes, he did by Proclamation *declare* against it, and prohibit his Subjects the taking of it.

This being the truth of the case, the Solemn League and Covenant to root out Prelacy, was sinful both for matter and form; and therefore not to be stood to, but repented of. And the Conformists by abjuring the Covenant, as it bound men to such disorderly reformations, are so far from absolving the people

people from lawful endeavours of Church-Reformation, or justifying them from perjury, that they only teach them to pay a just debt of repentance, for a notorious breach of the fifth Commandment, and unjust violation of former lawful Oaths, evils which they happened to fall into in a hurry of times, by the erroneous Doctrines and bad Example of their Leaders, which may teach the people for the future to study to be quiet, and do their own business, and take heed *who*, *how*, and *what* they hear.

7. And lastly, let the excellent worth both for piety, parts, learning, and zeal for holiness of many Conformists be considered, the dirt of this Argument cannot stick on them: But when persons through mistake or discontent separate from a Church and Ministery, they must either make the *Church* and *Ministry vile*, or their separation will make them *vile*. Men love not to be thought to do evil.

Argu-

Argument II.

If we hold Communion with the Publick Miniſters, we ſhall hold Communion with them in their publick Miniſterial ſins: It is therefore a duty to ſeparate.

Anſw. 1. THe Brethren firſt conclude the publick Miniſters One and All guilty of horrible crimes without proof; and then that themſelves ſhall partake with them in their guilt, if they own them for Paſtors. By ſuch imaginations as theſe, the Devil for many years laſt paſt, hath cheated the poor people of *England*, and rob'd them of the chiefeſt gifts of the Church Upon this ground *Robinſon*, *Cann*, and the reſt of the rigid *Browniſts*, pluckt away the Children of the Church from the breaſts of their own Mother, and put them to Nurſe in the ſeparate Congregations, and ruin'd them. *Read Mr.* Baxter's *Epiſtle to the ſeparate Congregations.*

2. The publick profeſſed Miniſterial ſins of the publick Miniſtery that the Objector ſpeaketh of, if there be any, are

are only ſins of ignorance, otherwiſe it is not like ſo many worthy men ſhould venture on them: Or indeed were the publick profeſſions, which the Objector calleth ſins, *ſo* indeed, it is much that ſuch and ſo many hundred profound judgments ſhould not be convinced of their ſinfulneſs. But

3. Let that fall out how it will, the ground of the Brethrens ſeparation on that account is not good: for that holding communion with Miniſters barely as *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, (and the common people can be charged with no other) will not make people participate with them of their miniſterial ſins. 'Tis one thing to partake of a Miniſter's gifts, and Chriſt's Sacraments by his hand; another thing to communicate of his ſins. Again, 'Tis one thing to participate with a Miniſter in the Miniſtry of that which is good, another thing to participate with him in the guilt of that which is evil. Now I ſay God's people may partake of the Miniſter's Gifts, and Chriſt's Sacraments by his hand, without participation of the Guilt of his perſonal or miniſterial evils: Or elſe the holy Prophets and people of old would never have held Church-Communion with the wicked Prieſts in their time; neither would

Christ have commanded his Disciples to communicate in the gifts of the Scribes and Pharisees sitting in *Moses* Chair, of whom he told his Disciples at the same time, that they were wicked men, that said, and did not.

4. If the Brethren themselves could not partake of their own Ministers ministerial gifts, without participating of their ministerial sins, they had better never communicate with them at all. Oh! how great and how many were the ministerial sins of the Pastors of divided Parties, in our late confusions upon unhinging the Government; one party prayeth against another as Schismaticks; the other preacheth and prayeth against them as Tyrants; a third party preacheth and prayeth against them both, as Antichristian Ministers; a fourth party preacheth, and prayeth, and writeth against them all, as under the fourth Beast, ignorant of the work of the day, railing on Superiours. Should the poor People, by joyning in Church-communion with Pastors, become guilty of their ministerial sins thereby, they are sometimes so great and so many, that it would go near to justifie the neglect of all Ordinances, and all Ministers.

5. And

5. And lastly, The Brethren that object, for the most part, do not scruple to hold communion with publick Ministers in prayer and preaching, which sure they would not do, if they thought they should partake with them of their ministerial sins thereby. And what good reason can be given, why Communion in the Sacraments should make persons partake of the ministerial sins of the Administrator, any more than communion with them in prayer and preaching?

Argument III.

If the Parish Churches be fill'd with Usurpers, and the true Ministers thrust into Corners, then 'tis no sin to separate.

1. LET the Brethren learn of Mr. *Baxter*. 'The Church is bound, saith 'he, to take many a man as a true Mini-'ster to *Them*, and receive the Ordinan-'ces from him in faith, and expectation 'of a blessing upon promise, who yet be-'fore God is a sinful Invader, an *Usurper* 'of the Ministry, and shall be condemned 'for it.

Answ. *Baxter's* Church-Government. p. 131.

2. But the preſent Pariſh-Miniſters are no *Uſurpers.*

To uſurp is to take poſſeſſion of a place once belonging to another, *without* or *againſt* Law. The Pariſh Miniſters now do not take their places without or againſt Law; and therefore are no Uſurpers, but true and lawful poſſeſſors of their places.

3. What was that created the Brethrens right, *in their opinion*, to publick places in the Long Parliament days, and *outed* others, but ſubjection to the Laws (ſuch as they were) then in being for that purpoſe? Now if obedience to the queſtionable Laws then in being ſerved them *then* to diſtinguiſh them from Uſurpers, ſurely by a far higher reaſon, obedience to the undoubted Laws *now* will juſtifie the right of preſent publick Miniſters, and diſtinguiſh them from Uſurpers.

4. When the Parliament put down the Epiſcopal Party, and ſet up the Presbyterian and Independant, the Brethren did not like to be called Uſurpers, but the Epiſcopal Party did always reckon them ſo, becauſe they took them to come into other mens places not legally excluded, but meerly by the power of *force*, without the power of right.

5. When

5. When King *Solomon* thought good to put down *Abiathar*, and ſet up *Zadoc* in his room, *Zadoc* was no Uſurper.

Argument IV.

It is ſin for Chriſtians to be without Diſcipline, and a more profitable Miniſtry, when they may have it. The Pariſh Churches are without Diſcipline, and have a leſs profitable Miniſtry. It is therefore no ſin to ſeparate.

1. IT is indeed a ſin for Chriſtians to content themſelves without Diſcipline, and the moſt profitable Miniſtry, when they may have it in a *lawful way*; that is, by Prayers to God, humble Addreſſes to Authority, faithful Performances of Duty, both to Miniſters and Church-members; though it ſhould always be remembred, that the *Rod* is not of the eſſence of the Family: It concerneth the well-being, but not the being of it. But to ſeparate from the Church, and gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches, and ſo to ſet up Altar againſt *Anſw.*

Altar to come at it, this seemeth a most unlawful course of seeking it: this is to deserve personal discipline ones self, for taking a bad course to come at Church-Discipline upon *others*. 1. Because 'tis to do evil that good may come thereof. 2. 'Tis a practice which no Scripture, Precept, or Example countenanceth. The Scripture-Churches, both Old and New, were most grievously corrupted for want of Discipline; but the Prophets, Christ, Apostles did all hold full communion with them notwithstanding, and commanded others to do the like. 3. Because to separate from the Church, *is in the nature* of the thing to destroy the Church, and that *directly*. 'Building the Church, saith Mr. *Baxter*, 'is but an orderly joyning of materials, what then is *disjoyning* but pulling down? This is to cure 'the Church by cutting her throat, saith he.

Luke 2.21. Luke 17. 14. Mat. 23 2.

Baxt Ep. to Saints Rest

2. The Judgments of the most learned Divines are utterly against separation for the want of Discipline. St. *Austin* inveighing against the Donatists separation upon the same pretence, saith thus: 'The 'devices of Separation are vain and *hurtful, and full of sacrilege*, because they 'are *ungodly*, and *proud*, and do much 'more

Calvins Institut. p. 415.

'more trouble the weak good ones, than 'they amend the ſtout evil ones.

Calvin calleth the ſeparation of the Donatiſts, becauſe the Biſhops did neglect diſcipline, *An ungodly Schiſm*: And to do like the Anabaptiſts of his time. Let the Brethren conſider this. 'He is free 'and diſcharged from curſe, ſaith St. *Auſtin*; and *Calvin* from him, 'Whoever 'he be, that either by rebuking amend-'eth what he can; or what he cannot a-'mend, excludeth, *ſaving the band of 'peace*: What he cannot amend, ſaving 'the band of peace, he doth diſallow 'with equity, and bear with ſtedfaſt-'neſs. *Calvin's Inſtit. l. 4. cap. 12. §13.*

St. *Cyprian* to the ſame purpoſe. 'Let 'a man therefore mercifully correct what 'he can, and what he cannot, let him 'patiently ſuffer, and with love grieve 'and lament it.

To this purpoſe Mr. *Baxter*. 'Proud 'men, ſaith he, will not grow in the 'ſame Field, or Church, where ſuch 'Tares do grow, but will tranſplant 'themſelves, and remove from the Field, 'becauſe God will not pluck up the Tares; 'eſpecially if any *miniſterial neglect of diſ-'cipline be conjoyned*; as too commonly 'it is; and inſtead of blaming their own 'pride, *Bax. Ep. to the ſeparate Congregations.*

'pride, they lay the blame on the cor-
'ruptions of the Church.

2. I prove the Pariſh-Churches are not without diſcipline, whether we reſpect the *Power* or actual exerciſe of diſcipline. That they have ſome power of diſcipline, I prove, *firſt*, From the Title of Rector, which the Law giveth to all Parſons of Pariſhes: *ſecondly*, From the Rubrick, where the Miniſter is not only authoriſed, but commanded to keep all ſcandalous perſons from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: And, *thirdly*, from the Canon, where it is written, *No Miniſter ſhall, in any wiſe, admit to the holy Communion any of his Care or Flock, which be openly known to live in any notorious ſin, without repentance; nor any which have maliciouſly and openly contended with their Neighbour, until they ſhall be reconciled. Fourthly*, Every Pariſh-Church hath Wardens under Oath, to preſent all ſcandalous ſinners, in order to puniſhment for their offences. *Fifthly*, and laſtly, Divers perſons, both Miniſters and others, that have been proved ſcandalous, have ſuffered cenſure, both in and about *London*, and elſewhere. To ſay nothing of the Excommunication of Quakers, and others, whom the Brethren did always judge worthy of cenſure.

Some

Some are of opinion, That there have been more proper acts of diſcipline performed in the Pariſh-Churches, upon juſt offenders, ſince the Reſtauration of the Biſhops, in a few years, than was in all the time of their abſence; though not ſo much as ſhould be and might be, if Officers and People did their duty. And the Brethren that complain ſhould conſider how far themſelves are acceſſary to the want of diſcipline, by their with-drawing their brotherly aſſiſtance; for that diſcipline muſt begin at the People, ſaid Mr. *Calamy* heretofore to the Independants that made this objection.

'Beſides, I cannot approve of the pra-'ctice of thoſe, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*, that 'becauſe moſt of the world are naught, do 'therefore conclude men dogs and ſwine, 'before that ever they did faithfully and 'lovingly admoniſh them, or perhaps be-'fore ever they have known them, or 'ſpoken with them; and hereupon will 'not communicate with them in the 'Lord's Supper, but ſeparate *into diſtinct* '*Congregations*; I perſuade to no ſuch *un-*'*godly ſeparation.* The Brethren that 'ſeparate, neglect their duty in order to 'diſcipline, and then ſeparate from the 'Church for want of diſcipline.

Baxter's Epiſt. to Saints Reſt

If

3. If the want of diſcipline will juſtifie ſeparation from the Pariſh-Churches now, then it would juſtifie the ſeparation of the Independants and Brownifts in the Long Parliaments days: For Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, The Presbyterians then had ſhewn their Government in Paper, not in Actions. That they generally had ſettled in a conſtant neglect of diſcipline many years together. That their practice, to let none partake of the Sacrament that refuſed to be examined, at the ſame time leaving them ſtated members uncenſured, was rather to *gather Churches out of Churches*, than to execute any proper act of diſcipline: or to this effect, *&c.* with much more to the ſame purpoſe.

Reform'd Paſtor. p. 216. Preface to Reform'd Paſtor.

Let the Brethren take notice by the way, what a deep ſenſe of evil Mr. *Baxter* had of gathering Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches: And let not the Brethren think it a ſmall matter to juſtifie all the ſeparations from the Pariſh-Churches in their days, againſt which they ſo mightily exclaimed heretofore. Is it a light matter to harden all the Sects in *England* that have ſeparated from the Church.

Again, With what ſincerity can the Brethren pretend the wants of diſcipline, to juſtifie ſeparation from the Pariſh-Churches,

Churches, that for many years together ſettled in a conſtant neglect of it?

4. And laſtly, Whereas it is ſaid, The ſeparating Miniſters are the more profitable, and the more lively Miniſters,

I anſwer, I will not deny but that ſome, yea many of the Miniſters, that are now laid aſide, while they had their miniſterial ſtanding in the Pariſh-Churches, and Catholick Communion, were profitable; but the beſt of them not more profitable than many that now take their places in the publick Eſtabliſhment, if ſo profitable. Compariſons we ſay are odious.

But let them however be never ſo profitable, if they once become Paſtors of ſtated oppoſite Aſſemblies to the Pariſh-Churches, they may continue zealous, but they ſhall ceaſe to be profitable as to the great ends of a Goſpel-miniſtry.

Epiſtle to ſeparate Congregations.

Mr. *Baxter* telleth the Separatiſts from the Pariſh-Churches, That the Phariſees Liturgy is of too frequent uſe in the ſeparate Aſſemblies: *I thank thee, O God, I am not as other men are, nor as this Publican.*

It cannot be denied, and can never enough be remembred and diſcourſed, for the admonition of all Miniſters and others, that the ſame perſons, and that in great num-

numbers, that while they kept the publick Communion, notwithſtanding all the pretended defects of the Pariſh-Churches, they have been known to grow in all the fruits of the Spirit, mentioned *Gal.* 5. *Faith*, *Love*, *Joy*, *Peace*, *Humility*, *Meekneſs*, *Obedience*. But after their departure from the Catholick Communion, that they might live in the Communion of a purer Church, they have been known to grow as faſt in the fruits of the fleſh; namely, Variance, Hatred, Emulation, Wrath, Striſe, Seditions, Hereſies; and many have fallen to horrible uncleanneſs.

Apologetical Narration.

The Independants heretofore tell us, they were caution'd againſt Browniſm, by the obſervation of the Rocks and Shelves they obſerved they ſplit upon.

We have the ſame reaſon to beware of all Separations from the Pariſh-Churches of *England* whatſoever.

Mr. *Baxter* having taken ſpecial notice of the ſtrange and wonderful Judgments of God that have followed perſons that have ſeparated from the Pariſh-Churches, for a purer Communion, writ an excellent Epiſtle to the ſeparate Congregations, wherein he lift up his voice like a Trumpet to awaken them, and convince them of their evil way: which let all the new Separatiſts read, and tremble.

'The

'The hand of God is apparently gone 'out againſt your ways of Separation; you 'ſee you do but prepare perſons for a fur- 'ther progreſs, Seekers, Ranters, Quakers, 'and too many profeſſed Infidels do ſpring 'up from amongſt you, as if this were 'your journies end, and the perfection of 'your revolt. *Baxter's* Epiſtle to ſeparate Congregations.

Again, 'By ſuch fearful deſertions did 'God formerly witneſs his deteſtation of 'thoſe that with-drew from the *Unity* of 'the *Church*.

Calvin ſpeaking of men that break in ſunder the bond of Church-Unity, which he reckoneth all to do that ſeparate from a *Church that hath the Word and Sacraments*; *No man*, ſaith he, *eſcapeth the due puniſhment of his divorce: He bewitcheth himſelf with moſt peſtilent errors, and wicked dotages.* *Calvin's Inſtit. l. 4 p. 339.*

And thus we have found it in *England*, as well as *Calvin* and others obſerved it in other Countries. So that for the beſt Miniſters and People to agree to break the Unity of the Church, for a purer and livelier Communion, is the way to become the worſt Miniſters and People; yea, No Miniſters, No Chriſtians.

'Oh! how dangerous and how deadly 'a Temptation is it, ſaith *Calvin*, when 'it doth but enter into our heart to depart *Calvin's Inſtit. lib. 4.*

'from

'from that Congregation wherein are 'seen the ſigns and tokens by which the 'Lord thought fit to deſcribe his Church, '*Let us beware*, ſaith he, *of ſo wicked a* '*diſagreement*.

Argument V.

If there be in one City or Country ſome lawful Paſtors, that meet in Houſes with their Flocks, and ſome that meet in Temples, he is the Schiſmatick that meeteth not with the firſt in Houſes, being of his Charge; and he is the Schiſmatick that meeteth not with the other in Temples, being of his Charge; therefore to ſay, All muſt come to the Temples, or all muſt not, are both Schiſmatical Aſſertions.

Anſw. 1. THis Argument ſtandeth upon a ſandy rotten foundation, namely, that all Perſons, Miniſters and People, notwithſtanding the Laws to the contrary, may knot in Church-Communion as they pleaſe. Whereas it dependeth upon

on the Nurſe-Father of the Church to govern the Paſtors, to bound and fix the particular Church-Communion of all Chriſtians in his Dominions, being a part of his work in the buſineſs of the Lord. A King of the true Religion, is not only a King of his Subjects as *Men*, but as Chriſtians; though *Bellarmine* ſay the contrary, to advance the Pope above Kings. That it is a part of his Truſt to do his utmoſt, that all things concerning the Worſhip of God and Religion may be decently and orderly performed by his Chriſtian Subjects; and that the whole Affair of Religion may be managed to the higheſt advantage for the glory of God, the honour of Religion, and the edification of Souls. Kings are commanded to keep all the Law of God, to ſerve God, to kiſs the Son. This being ſpoken to Kings, not as *Men*, for ſo it would concern them then no more than other men, but as Kings: It followeth ſome royal act is required of them, proper to them *as Kings*. Therein do Kings, as they are commanded by God, ſerve God as Kings, if in their Dominions they command things good, and forbid evil; not only in reſpect of humane Society, but the Worſhip of God alſo, ſaith St. *Auſtin*. And this is that Royal Nurſing the Church,

1 Tim. 2. 2

1 Cor. 14. 40.

Deut. 17. 19.

Pſa. 2. 11.

Church, which by the Prophet God hath promiſed, ſaith *Grotius*, in his Right of the higheſt power.

In order hereto, the King putteth the whole Nation into parts, as the General of an Army putteth his Soldiers; buildeth, or cauſeth to be built publick Temples for each part to meet at for the Worſhip of God: Appointeth approved Paſtors for the performance of the Offices of Religion to each part; Encourageth the Univerſities, and all publick Schools of Learning; Fixeth maintenance for the Miniſtry, maketh Laws to bind all the Chriſtians inhabiting in each part ordinarily to tend upon the Word and Sacraments, adminiſtred by the Paſtors there fixed, to avoid confuſion, and to puniſh all ſuch, as diſturbers of the peace and common Order, that ſhall not obey.

By which means, if Paſtors, and other Church-Officers and People did their duty, not one Chriſtian in the Kingdom but would come under inſpection, except in ſuch Pariſhes which are grown too numerous, and indeed calleth for rectifying.

Whereas, if ſuch particular care were not taken, it cannot rationally be imagined, how one Third of the Nation ſhould come

come under any Church-care at all, or so much as hear the Gospel truly taught.

If the whole were not put into parts under particular Officers, the multitude would be in confusion: If they had not publick Temples to meet at, the parts would be at a loss for publick Meeting-places: If no Universities to breed and fit men for the Ministery, Popery would over-run us for want of learned men to defend the Truth; If Pastors were not approved by men Orthodox, Hell would furnish the Church with Hereticks and false Prophets, instead of true Pastors: If maintenance for Ministers were not fixed, Ministers would be discouraged; for many would rather have no Ministers, than be at the charge of maintaining them. If no Laws to bind Christians to frequent the publick Ordinances, and keep their Stations, multitudes would indulge themselves in idleness and schism, which the Laws are a curb to.

Now where is the man living that can tell a better way to provide for the honour of Religion, and the salvation of a great Nation of Christian souls, where there are so many millions to be lookt after? Neither in all this doth the King any thing but in a just pursuit of his Re-

gal Truſt; for that he put forth no Act *in* Holy Things, but only *about* Holy Things: No inward Act purely Eccleſiaſtical, but outward purely Political, though about Eccleſiaſtical objects, ſuch as *Aſah*, *Jehoſaphat*, *Hezekiah*, and others of the Kings of Iſrael did. Which Presbyterians do all allow to the Higheſt Power.

Beſides all this, the Baptiſmal Covenant bindeth all that enter into it, to obey Authority, making Laws for the general good; for that it bindeth men to all Goſpel-duties, as Circumciſion bound the Iſraelites to the Law of *Moſes*.

Rom. 13.

How then can the Brethren imagine a relation between Paſtor and People, contrary to the Law; as if particulars of a Community, mutually engaged to walk regularly, might break and tranſgreſs all publick Orders, and be blameleſs.

The Law appointeth ſuch an approved Paſtor to perform the Offices of Religion to ſuch a Company of Chriſtians, in ſuch a Pariſh. The Law appointeth all thoſe perſons to own and attend ſuch an one for their Paſtor, till lawful Governours find cauſe to remove him. That Cohabitation hath an aptitude in it for conſtant and ordinary Church-communion, agreeth to common ſenſe, and is according

cording to Scripture-example. Particular Churches took their Name and Relation from Cohabitation in Scripture-times: The Christians dwelling at *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, and *Coloß*, take the name of the Church of *Corinth*, the Church of *Ephesus*, and the Church of *Colosi*. And in great Cities of Christians, where the multitude is so great as in *London*, that there is a necessity of putting the whole into parts, 'tis highly reasonable for the common good, that the Neighbourhood of each part should concur together in Church-communion, because being near one another, they are in the better capacity to perform the duty of brethren to one another; so that the Law, Right Reason, and the Word of God, hath joyned the Parish-Ministers and People together.

Whosoever then shall go about to snatch away the people from the publick Minister, authorised by Law in this Nation (where we have a fixed Ecclesiastical Estate) and gather the people to himself, to wait on his Ministry as a Pastor, I fear he will prove the Schismatick, for that he breaketh the Union of the Church causelessly, and worketh confusion in the Church of God. 'I ever ap-'proved a peaceable Conformist before a *Saints* 'tur- *Rest.*

'turbulent Nonconformiſt, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*.

Again, 'Above all, be followers of 'peace and unity: He that is not a Son 'of peace is not a Son of God. I differ 'from my brethren in many things of 'conſiderable moment; yet if I ſhould 'zealouſly preſs my judgment on others, 'ſo as to diſturb the peace of the Church, 'and ſeparate from my brethren, I ſhould 'fear I ſhould prove a fire-brand in Hell, 'for being a fire-brand in the Church. 'I charge you, if God ſhould give me 'up to any factious Church-rending 'courſe, that you forſake me, and fol-'low me not a ſtep.

Argument VI.

Nature teacheth to hold Perſonal Communion with thoſe Churches which have all Ordinances, and the pureſt Communion, and the moſt lively Members, not medling with other men.

1. NAture alſo teacheth not to hurt a Community for a private Convenience; to prefer a part before the whole, is not natural: Foraſmuch as the parts cannot be conſerved but in the whole, 'tis but reaſonable that *parts* quit their particular Inclinations to be ruled by the *Inclination* of the *whole*. The light of Nature teacheth, That the general good of Conſociations is to be preferr'd before the particular good of particular Perſons, or particular Conſociations.

2. Nature teacheth all loving, dutiful, and grateful Children, not to forſake and leave their Mother when ſhe is ſick or poor, if they may keep with her without ſin; but on the contrary to labour to enrich and heal her. 'The way to cure 'the Churches, ſaith Mr. *Calamy*, is not

Mr. Calamy's Sermon at Aldermanbury, 1679. Engl. to Saints Rest.

'to ſeparate from them, but to continue 'with them; and by living with them, to 'labour to enrich and heal them. 'By 'other ſins men pull down the Church 'conſequentially, but by ſeparation they 'do it directly, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*: And 'that by gathering Churches into diſtinct 'Bodies in *oppoſition*, they cut the throat 'of the Church; and ſurely that is a-gainſt nature. If any one ſhould object, yes, but the new Separatiſts do not gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches, in *oppoſition* to them. To this I anſwer in the words of Mr. *Baxter*: 'Building 'is putting materials together; what 'then is disjoyning but pulling down? That practice then that pulleth down the Pariſh-Churches, is done in oppoſition to them, what ever the parties intend: But to gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches is to pull them down, and therefore a practice in perfect oppoſition to them.

3. Separation to the apparent hurt of the publick ſpeaketh the ſad loſs of Catholick Principles and Affections. Firſt men loſe Catholick Principles, then Catholick Affections, and then fall to uncatholick Practices, *ſinking into ſelf*. But 'tis below the ſpirit and practice of a generous Chriſtian to look at his own things *only*.

Phil 2 4.

only. The Apoſtle ſought not his own profit, but the profit of many that they might be ſaved: He pleaſed not himſelf, but all men for their edification: And 'tis his expreſs precept to the whole Church; Let no man ſeek his own things, but every man anothers weal. 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. 1 *Cor.* 10. 24.

But the caſe of the Pariſh-Churches is not all alike. *Object.*

'Tis true, they are not all alike, in all reſpects; in ſome the Miniſterial gifts are more excellent, in others leſs; but they are all alike as to the lawfulneſs of Communion with them, and the unlawfulneſs of ſeparation from them. For that every Pariſh-Church, where an approved Miniſter is fixed, is a true viſible Church, to which Chriſt hath promiſed his preſence: There is all that is eſſential to a true viſible Church, that is plain, becauſe there is both *matter* and *form* of ſuch a Church. 1. There is the *Matter*: for there is a company of viſible Saints, that is, a company of Profeſſors of ſaving faith in Chriſt, by the Baptiſmal Covenant ſeparated for God, and dedicated to him; and ſo take the name of Saints as the primitive Churches did. 2. There is the *Form* too; and that is congregating themſelves together in a ſtated courſe to worſhip God in Chriſt, To call upon *Anſw.*

his Name, To hear his Word, to partake of his Sacraments. Neither is any ſinful thing impoſed as a condition of Lay-communion, in the judgment of the Brethren themſelves. Now nothing more is required to denominate a true Church, with which communion may be held without ſin.

Calv. *Inſtit. lib.* 4. *p.* 311. 'Every Congregation, ſaith *Calvin*, 'that pretendeth the name of the Church, 'muſt be thus tried as with a Touchſtone, 'if it have in it the Word and Sacra'ments, the Order appointed by the 'Lord, it will not deceive us; let us 'boldly yield it the honour due unto the 'Church.

In another place, 'There is not a 'doubtful, not a deceitful face of a 'Church, where the Word and Sacra'ments go, reverently heard, and pure'ly adminiſtred, Chriſt goeth along with 'them; for his promiſe cannot deceive, '*Matth.* 18. 20. And theſe can be no 'where in a fixed ſtayed ſtate, but they 'muſt bring forth fruit. Thus far He.

Calv. *Inſtit. lib.* 4. *p.* 341. 'The Pariſh-Churches being one and 'all of this character, they are ſuch 'Churches from which a godly man may 'not ſeparate, where the Word and Sa'craments are, ſaith *Calvin*. Again, 'Such a Church is never to be caſt off, 'though

'though it ſwarm full of many other 'faults; yea ſome faultineſs creep into 'the Adminiſtration of Doctrine and Sa-'craments.

It muſt needs then be a grievous ſin to ſeparate from the pooreſt Pariſh-Church in *England*; nay the more grievous, and the greater is the ſin of a godly able Member to ſeparate from ſuch a Church, than from one more perfect, becauſe there is the moſt need of the brotherly aſſiſtance of abler brethren. If that part of the Church where the lot of more able perſons are caſt, happen to be uncomely by the weak gifts of the Miniſter, the ignorance and defects of the Members, let ſuch Brethren hearken to the Apoſtle upon the uncomely parts. We beſtow more abundant honour, alluding to the natural Body and Mark, that there may be no *Schiſm* in the Body. And here let me add, 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.

Should an honeſt and zealous knowing Chriſtian, whoſe lot by God's providence becometh caſt into the Communion of a poor weak Church; I ſay ſhould he in the fear of God, and love of the Church, and poor Brethren, in ſtead of ſeparating from the Church, hold the cloſer communion with the Church, and conſidering the true ſtate of the Paſtors and

and Brethren, apply himſelf to them for the general good, endeavouring to prefer the common intereſt, by all manner of holy prudent and fitting applications, he ſhall undoubtedly find comfort in it at death more than they that ſeparate: For they to their power have pulled down the Church for their private convenience; the other denied his own convenience to ſupport the Church.

Argument VII.

As we condemn not all the Pariſh-Churches beſide when we are but in one of them, ſo we condemn none of them abſolutely, when we are in none of them, elſe the Pariſh Churches ſinfully condemn the French and Dutch.

Anſw. 1. THe bare ſimple meeting of Pariſh-Churches in ſeveral places, doth not amount to condemning one another, no more than ſeveral Companies of an united Army quartering in ſeveral places doth, becauſe though they meet in ſeveral places, they all meet as parts of one another

another in the ſame communion, parted only for the better accommodation of the whole. But Separatiſts, that gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches into diſtinct Congregations, under a *diſtinct* undiſcovered Government; ſuch meet not *as parts* in the Communion of the whole, but *as parties* cut off from the Communion of the whole, and in *oppoſition* to the whole: For which there being no ſufficient cauſe, they do moſt ſinfully condemn their Brethren, and ſtand juſt in the condition of a Troop or Company in an Army, that in diſcontent have withdrawn themſelves from the main Body, reſolving to ſtand upon their own defence, refuſing to give and take influences from the whole. Now look what the ſtate of ſuch a Troop or Company would be in the judgment of the Army, the ſame muſt ſuch Aſſemblies be in the judgment of the Church.

Argu-

Argument VIII.

The Temples and publick Maintenance are in the Magiſtrate's hand, and he may give them to whom he will: And if he diſpoſſeſs the lawful Paſtors of them, they are bound to obey him: but they may not take themſelves diſcharged of their Paſtoral Office in relation to their Flocks. Magiſtrates ordain not Miniſters, nor degrade them.

Anſw. 1. THe Argument ſuppoſeth the Pariſh-Paſtors and Churches to have no *Authoritative Government* over them at all, or elſe that they *ought* to have none; but that every particular Paſtor and Congregation throughout all *England* ſhould ſtand independent, both which ſuppoſitions are very falſe.

That in a Chriſtian Nation where the King is of the true Religion, and where there is near ten thouſand particular Paſtors and Congregations; to ſay that theſe by divine right ſhould *all* ſtand independ-

dependent without ſome ſuperiour power to govern the whole, is againſt the light of nature, and common ſenſe; for where ever multitude is, there is confuſion, unleſs that multitude by virtue of *Order* be brought to an Unity. It cannot be otherwiſe, but that plurality not united together by the bond of Union, muſt come to diviſion, and from diviſion to contention, and from contention to confuſion, as we found by experience upon unhinging the Government by Biſhops, and the loſs of our fixed Eccleſiaſtical State.

2. Since the Reſtoration of the King, and the Biſhops, the Pariſh-Paſtors and Churches become fixed by *Law* again, and are under Government. And if the Brethren have taken the Oath of Supremacy, they have owned the King to be ſupreme Governour of all Perſons and Cauſes in his Dominions both Eccleſiaſtical and Civil. Now except the Brethren think the bounding particular Congregations, and ordering the Paſtors, to be no Eccleſiaſtical Cauſes: They are both under the government and ordering of the King, and determined by the Laws; and particular Paſtors and Congregations cannot claim Independency without ſin.

The

The King hath made the Biſhops Governours under himſelf of all the particular Paſtors and Pariſh-Churches in *England*, as any one may ſee that readeth the Book of Canons, wherein the King ratifieth and enjoyneth this Canon with the reſt; That Excommunication *ipſo facto* pronounced againſt the man that depraveth the Government by Archbiſhops and Biſhops, &c.

Book of Canons. Seventh Canon.

Now how ſhould the Brethren continue lawful Paſtors to particular Flocks in the Church of *England*, contrary to the publick Laws of Superiours? The Law ſaith all Incumbents that perform not ſuch conditions, ſhall ceaſe to be Pariſh-Paſtors: Thereupon others become placed in their room. The Brethren ſay, though they do not perform thoſe conditions, and others be put in their places, yet their Paſtoral relation to their Flocks ſtandeth ſtill. Now I ask how this can be, except the Brethren reckon themſelves lawleſs perſons.

Object. Why but though they are no lawful Paſtors before the Church of *England*, and in the eye of the Law, yet they are before God.

Anſw.

Anſw. 1. If they are no lawful Paſtors before the Church, and in the eye of the Law, they cannot be lawful Paſtors of their particular Flocks before God, becauſe for the ſafety and common-weal of the Church, God hath committed the power of governing both Paſtors and Flocks to the Nurſe-father of the Church (whom the Brethren uſe to ſtile a Biſhop of things *WITHOUT:*) To that purpoſe the power of placing, diſplacing, depoſing, ſuſpending, and removing Paſtors, as he ſhall find cauſe, *Without* or *Againſt* the Peoples or Paſtors minds: Otherwiſe, an end ſhall be propounded him; that is, to preſerve the Churches Purity, Peace, and Unity, but the neceſſary means ſhall be denied him: One whereof, is to have the power of placing, diſplacing, tranſplanting, or temporary ſuſpending Miniſters; for that ſometimes they prove ſcandalous, ſometimes heretical, ſometimes ſeditious, ſometimes improved for publick uſe. *Jus div. Presb.*

In all which caſes, it is plainly neceſſary for the common good, that Paſtors be removed, but 'tis not always found that Paſtors and People are willing to it, but the contrary. That popular election is not abſolutely neceſſary to the relation

tion of Paſtor and Flock (though in ſome caſes convenient) is the declared Judgments of the *London*-Miniſters, as well as others; for which they give ſtrong Reaſons. *Jus Divin. Miniſterii Anglic.* p. 132.

Jus divin. Miniſt. p. 132.

Object. But if it be ſaid *further*, Magiſtrates do not Ordain Miniſters, nor degrade them.

Anſw. 1. 'Tis one thing for a Magiſtrate to degrade a Miniſter, another thing to prohibit him the exerciſe of his *Miniſtry in his Dominions*. This, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*, unqueſtionably he may do.

2. *Solomon* did not ordain *Abiathar*, but he depoſed him, and ſet up *Zadoc* in his room. And Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, 'It 'was juſt *Solomon*, *David*, and other 'Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah* did take down 'and ſet up Prieſts, and order the Offi-'cers of the Houſe of God. The care of the Church is ſo committed to Kings, in the Scripture, that they are commended, when the Church goeth the right way; and taxed, when it runneth amiſs: And therefore her Government belongeth in chief unto Kings; for otherwiſe, one man would be commended for anothers care, and taxed for anothers negligence.

Baxter. *Holy Commonweal.* p. 302.

Book of Canons, 1640.

The

The old Nonconformiſts therefore being ſilenced, did acquieſce therein, and being objected againſt by the Browniſts for ſo doing, they juſtifie themſelves by this Argument; 'If a guiltleſs perſon put out 'of his charge by the Churches Autho-'rity, may yet continue in it, what pro-'ceedings can there be againſt guilty 'perſons, who in their own conceit are 'always guiltleſs, or will at leaſt pretend 'ſo to be, ſeeing they alſo will be always 'ready to object againſt the Churches 'Judgment, that they are called of God, 'and therefore will not give over their 'Miniſtry at the will of man. Mr. *Rath-'band*, p. 41.

Upon the whole then, It appeareth a vain Plea of the Brethren, that after their particular Flocks are by publick Governors and the Laws diſpoſed to other Shepherds legally qualified, they ſhould yet ſtile themſelves, The Legal Paſtors, and call the preſent Incumbents Uſurpers. As if a Captain when his Commiſſion is taken from him, by the General, and his Company transferred to the Conduct of another, ſhould yet affirm he was Captain, and the Company his Company: Should any diſcontented Officer in an Army plead thus, and make a party upon it, and diſturb the peace of the Army, it

would be very ſcandalous. There is the ſame reaſon it ſhould be ſo in the Church.

Object. But what, Are Magiſtrates to be obeyed abſolutely, in point of *Paſtors*, *Church* and *Worſhip?* If ſo, then in *Spain*, *France*, *Italy*, and all over the World.

Anſw. No doubt the power of the Magiſtrate in point of Paſtors, Church and Worſhip is limited by God: And therefore if King *Solomon*, when he put down *Abiathar*, had ſet up a Prieſt of *Baal* in his room. and commanded the People to own him for the Prieſt of the true God, he ought not to have been obeyed: But ſince he ſet up *Zadoc* in his room, a true Prieſt of the ſame Religion, he ought to be obeyed, becauſe he did but change the *Officer*, not the *Religion*.

Object. Magiſtrates may drive us on to our duties in Religion, but not from our duties: Therefore if he command true ordained Miniſters not to preach, or people not to hear them, or not to perform their duty to them; *Whether it be better to obey God or men, judge ye.*

Anſw.

Anſw. 1. Truth of Ordination *Alone*, will not continue a Title to a publick ſtation in the Miniſtry *in all caſes*. *Abiathar* was truly ordained a Prieſt, but yet the Brethren grant it was lawful for *Solomon* to depoſe him. If true ordained Miniſters ſhall after their Ordination, by Scandal, Hereſie, or Schiſm, threaten the Church, they are to be avoided by Divine Law: As by private perſons, in a private capacity, ſo by publick perſons, in a publick capacity, for the common ſafety of the Church. *Grotius* telleth us, "The right of removing a certain per- "ſon, or perſons from the Miniſtry of "a certain place, ought always to re- "main in the higheſt power: Nor only "may he do this by way of puniſhment, "but by way of caution too; and un- "leſs the higheſt power could do this, "the Commonwealth were not ſufficient "to ſecure it ſelf.

Rom. 16. 17.

Grotius *right of the higheſt Pow.* p. 230. p. 240.

For a Non-conforming Miniſter then, though truly ordained, to undertake to preach in this Nation contrary to Law, and draw people to hear him contrary to Law, ſome think ſo far from being any point of Obedience to God, that it maketh both Miniſter and People guilty

of greater evils than I am willing to mention.

'Tis true, if a Jewiſh or Heathen Magiſtrate, being of a falſe Religion, command an Apoſtle of the true Religion not to Preach any more in Chriſt's Name: then to diſobey Man would be to obey God; which was the caſe of the Apoſtle *Peter*, who though he could work Miracles to juſtifie his Divine Commiſſion, yet the Council of the Jews forbad him to ſpeak any more in Chriſt's Name: To whom he ſaith, *Whether it be better to obey God or men, judge ye.* Act. 4. 19.

But this is far from our Brethrens caſe; and therefore this Text is impertinently urged.

Becauſe our Non-conformiſts can plead no extraordinary Call to the Miniſtry, as *Peter* could: They can work no Miracles to juſtifie their Commiſſion, as *Peter* could. On the other hand, our Lawmakers, the King and Parliament are no Jews, as that Council was to whom the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpake theſe words. But on the contrary.

With

With us the Supreme Magiſtrate is a *Chriſtian*: And inſtead of *forbidding* perſons to preach in *Chriſt's Name*, as the Jewiſh Magiſtrates did, he filleth the publick Temples with Paſtors or Preachers in Chriſt's Name; and quite contrary to the Jews, *commandeth* them to preach in his Name, and the People to hear them upon certain Penalties if they neglect; and for reaſons of Church and State, forbiddeth private Conventions for Worſhip; as the Church of *Scotland* was ever wont to do. This is our caſe. Now for Miniſters and People, as this caſe is, to walk croſs to publick Authority, and diſobey man, I fear is to diſobey God, who hath ſaid, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher power.* Rom. 13. 1.

Argument IX.

If Magiſtrates would appoint us unskilful Phyſicians for our Bodies, when we can chooſe better for our ſelves, we love our lives too well, to think we ſhould obey them: But the Magiſtrate hath leſs power to deprive us of the choice of our own beſt Soul Phyſicians, than of our Body Phyſicians; for that the danger of Death is leſs terrible than the danger of Damnation.

Anſw. Jus divi. Miniſt. p. 132.

1. THE *London* Miniſters, as well as others, have given divers good Reaſons, why in ſome caſes, People are not to be truſted with the choice of their Miniſters.

2. Some think, by reflecting upon the furious proceedings of unpeaceable ſpirited men this laſt Thirty Years, that it is far better for Religion, and the ſafety of the People, to enjoy a peaceable ſpirited Miniſter, though of weaker gifts; than

than a turbulent, though of never ſo excellent gifts, for that peace to the Church is as life to the man.

The moſt Learned Lord *Bacon*, ſpeaking of peace in the Church, and the benefits of it to thoſe within the Church, ſaith, 'It containeth infinite Bleſſings, 'it eſtabliſheth Faith, it kindleth Cha'rity. The outward peace of the 'Church, diſtilleth into peace of Con'ſcience, and it turneth the labours of 'Writing and reading of Controver'ſies, into Treatiſes of Mortification and 'Devotion. But ſpeaking of diſ-union, he ſaith, ''Tis worſe for the Church, than 'corruption of Manners. *Lord Bacon's Eſſays, p. 13.*

3. If the higheſt power for reaſons of ſtate, ſhould appoint choſen and approved Phyſicians to any place, who can refuſe them? *Grotius* telleth us, 'Though na'turally men chuſe Teachers for their 'Children, and give them Guardians, 'ſick perſons make uſe of what Phyſici'an they pleaſe; yet in many places 'Guardianſhip is appointed by Law, or 'the will of the Magiſtrate; Phyſicians 'and School-maſters are conſtituted by 'publick Order, with Interdiction of 'others from the practice of thoſe facul-

'ties. And he ſaith, 'This right is com-
'petent to the higheſt power. And as
for the appointing of Paſtors, he ſaith
thus, 'That ſometimes there may be juſt
'cauſes why the higheſt Power ſhould
'challenge to it ſelf the election of Pa-
Right of higheſt Power. 'ſtors. *No wiſe man will deny.* Many
'Reaſons he urgeth, *p.* 215. For often
'Errours introduced into the Church of
'God, againſt the Word of God, cannot
'be rooted out by other means. Often
'there is no other way to avoid Schiſm:
with more to the ſame purpoſe, and conclu-
deth, 'The manner of election of Paſtors
'to be of the number of thoſe things
'that are not ſpecially determined by
'Law Divine: And that accordingly in
'ancient time, the Church ſometime
'proceeded one way, and ſometime ano-
Right, p. 195. 'ther way, according to the different
'ſtate and condition of the Church. This
'he ſheweth at large; and that this alſo
'was the Judgment of *Beza*, p. 195.

4. If the Doctrine preached in the pooreſt Pariſh-Church in *England*, be humbly heard and embraced, though preached by a weak Miniſter, there can be no danger of damnation, becauſe 'tis the Doctrine of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which is the power of God to Salvation.

on. And the very ſame for ſubſtance which the Brethren preach in private (if they preach Truth:) And if any preach contrary thereto, ſuch are no Miniſters allowed by Authority.

5. The few godly Names in the Church of *Sardis*, did not only keep themſelves in the love of God, but in a ſtate of much purity, even under a *dead* Miniſtry. For that *Angel*, though he had a Name to live, was dead. Salvation then is not in danger under a weak, ſo it be a true Miniſtry, unleſs it be the peoples own fault: And ſo it will be under the moſt lively Miniſtry in the World, but higher Edification only; which inconvenience by diligent Prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures, eſpecially Chriſt's Sermon on the Mount, with other good Books, godly Conference, and good works, may be redeemed. *Rev.* 3. 1.

6. The natural itch in common People to quarrel with Superiors, Paſtors and others, and with-drawing their due obedience, hath been of very ſad conſequence in *England*. 'I think, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*, 'till we have better taught even our godly People, what credit and obedience 'is due to their Teachers and Spiritual Guides, *Mr.* Baxt. *againſt* Crandon p. 83.

'Guides, the Churches of *England* ſhall 'never have peace, or any good or eſta- 'bliſh'd order: We are broken for want 'of the knowledge of this Truth; till 'this be known, we ſhall never be well 'bound up and healed.

In another place, 'Art thou ready to 'cenſure the Doctrine of thy Teachers, 'the Actions of thy Rulers, and the Per- 'ſons of thy Brethren, beyond doubt 'thou art a proud perſon, pride hath 'ſeized on thy Heart, there is too much 'Hell in thee to have any acquaintance at 'Heaven. It is poſſible his invention and *S. Reſt. p.* 'memory, may furniſh his Tongue with *70.* 'humble and heavenly expreſſions, but in 'his Spirit there is no more Heaven than 'there is Humility.

Argu-

Argument X.

The new Separatiſts do not ſeparate from the Pariſh-Churches upon the ſame terms that ſome others do; viz. *as being no true Churches of Chriſt, having no true Miniſtry, nor true Worſhip, with which communion may lawfully be held: but the Presbyterians ſeparate to enjoy a better Miniſtry, Diſcipline, and a purer Communion, and will ſometimes hold Communion with the Pariſh-Churches, where they can have no better; ſo that their Separation is but like removing from one Pariſh-Church to another: 'Tis not ſetting up* Altar againſt Altar.

1. *THe culpable Schiſm of the Brethren* lieth in matter of fact, That they cauſleſly and cruelly divide the Church, let the terms upon which they do it be what they will. *Anſw.*

2. To

2. To remove from one Pariſh-Church to another Pariſh-Church, was never called Separation, nor ever counted blame-worthy, becauſe all the Pariſh-Churches in *England* are in one and the ſame common Communion, under one and the ſame Government and Diſcipline, meeting in parts for neceſſity ſake, and by publick order: So that by ſuch removing from one Pariſh-Church to another, there is no publick Order broke, there is no affront offered to Authority: But to gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches eſtabliſhed by Law, into diſtinct Congregations, under a diſtinct Government, contrary to the publick Laws, this is downright Separation: This is plainly to ſet up Altar againſt Altar, in the Language of Mr. *Baxter* in his Book of Reſt: *Such Diſunion and Separation as this*, he ſaith, *is utterly intolerable, becauſe it cutteth the Church into ſhreds: It directly demoliſheth and pulleth down the Church. Building*, ſaith he, *is but an orderly joyning the materials. What then is disjoyning, but pulling down?* and to do thus, *is to cure the Church by cutting her throat*, as hath been noted before.

Baxter's *Ep to the Reſt.*

2. Theſe

2. Theſe new Separatiſts, by their ſeparation upon theſe terms, make their Schiſm (in ſome reſpects) more criminal, and leſs excuſable, both before God and man, than the worſt Sect that ever ſeparated from the Pariſh-Churches: Becauſe the Browniſts and Anabaptiſts have always pleaded for the juſtification of their Separation from the Pariſh-Churches, that our Churches, Miniſtry and Worſhip were falſe, yea Antichriſtian; and therefore they could not hold Communion with the Pariſh-Churches without ſin. Now though they are abuſed by their wild and mad conceits, yet their erroneous conſciences make their Schiſm leſs criminal before God, than the new Presbyterian Schiſm; becauſe though they believe the Pariſh-Churches true Churches, the Miniſtry a true Miniſtry, the Worſhip true Worſhip, and therefore ſuch as they may not only lawfully hold Communion with, but that ſometimes they ought to do it: Yet preſume to gather Churches out of them into diſtinct Congregations; and that after themſelves have told us in their Divine Right of Presbytery (with truth enough) That *to gather Churches out of Churches*, meaning the Pariſh-Churches of *England*,

Preface to the Divine Right of Church-Government.

land, is a practice without all Scripture-precedent, contrary to Apoſtolical Precept: The ſcattering of the Churches, the Mother of Confuſion, The Daughter of Schiſm, and the Stepmother of Edification.

We believe the truth of this Propoſition now, and that it ſhineth with its own light, and that it is utterly impoſſible ever to ſhew one Scripture Precept or Precedent, where the beſt members have ſeparated from a true Church (though corrupt in many things) into a *diſtinct* Congregation, to become a new Church of themſelves, *merely* for a more *lively Miniſtry*, *Diſcipline*, and *purer Communion*. Sure I am, the pious and zealous people of the corrupt Churches of the New Teſtament did not do thus. In the Church of *Sardis* there was but a few living names; the Miniſter and the generality of the people was dead. But what, do we find theſe few living names ſeparating from the dead Angel, and dead part of the Church, for a more pure and lively communion? No ſuch matter: Neither did the Lord Jeſus in his Letter from Heaven to theſe few living names, give them any ſuch Precept: He praiſes the few living names, that they kept themſelves pure in the communion of a bad, undiſciplin'd Church;

Church; but did not command them to ſeparate from the reſt, into a diſtinct body, for a purer communion amongſt themſelves: Yet he neither wanted love to them, nor wiſdom to direct them.

3. Conſider that the moſt rigid Browniſts and Separatiſts themſelves, have declaimed againſt Separation from ſuch a Church, upon ſuch grounds as you inſiſt on. *Robinſon* ſaith thus, 'That from 'a true Church, ſo remaining, ſepara- 'tion from ſuch a Church is intolerable 'for any corruptions whatſoever: A wick- 'ed Schiſm it is, ſaith he. Robinſ. *Reaſons diſcuſſed*, p. 82.

4. Whereas you gather the beſt people out of the Pariſh-Churches, into diſtinct Congregations, for a better, and purer communion ſake; conſider, this practice is the effect of ſinful ſelf-love, that would provide well for it ſelf, though never ſo much to the detriment of the publick. Mr. *Edwards* ſaid from Mr. *Cartwright*, the white Devil was in this pretence. 'Tis true, that where there is in any Nation an Army of a hundred thouſand men; for *ten* or *twenty* Captains to gather all the *valiant*, *faithful*, *diligent*, *skilful* Souldiers of the Army into *ten* or *twenty* Troops or Companies: This would

would make ten or twenty excellent Troops or Companies, and no doubt would be very pleaſant to the Captains and ſouldiers ſo related. But what miſchief, by this means, would be done to the whole Army? Were it not every way better for the whole Army, that the beſt Souldiers ſhould be ſcattered throughout the Army, ſome in every Troop and Company, for the giving good example, and ſpiriting and provoking the reſt to their duty? Conſider this well, and apply this ſimilitude to your Separation from the Pariſh-Churches, the reaſon being evidently the ſame, and you cannot but accept conviction, that your Separation, if you ſhould perſiſt in it, would endanger the loſs of many thouſand ſouls, wrong the great intereſt of Chriſtian Religion in the Nation, and extremely hazard the Proteſtant cauſe. Remember the Church is compared to an Army with Banners.

4. Conſider how unlike this ſelfiſh practice is, to the *Noble*, *Generous*, Catholick ſpirit of Chriſt and his Apoſtles: Scripture telleth us, that Chriſt, though he was rich, he made himſelf poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. You on the contrary, to accommodate

modate your ſelves, care not *who* nor *how many* you make poor, I mean in ſpiritual comfort.

Again compare your practice with theſe Scriptures of the Apoſtle *Paul*, and you will be aſhamed of it: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man on anothers alſo. Let no man ſeek his own things, but every man anothers weal. I ſeek not my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved: Upon the uncomely parts we beſtow the more abundant honour, that there may be no Schiſm in the body, but that the whole body may have the ſame care one for another.* Brethren, to reconcile your practice with theſe Scriptures, you will find a hard task, except you were miſtaken when you ſaid, To gather Churches out of our Pariſh-Churches, was the Mother of confuſion: If Separation be the Mother of confuſion, God is not the Author of it: For God is the God of order, not of confuſion. And if it be the Mother of confuſion, how can you proceed in ſuch a path?

Object. If you ſhall ſay, as ſome do, We hold with the ſeparate people of the Presbyterian perſwaſion, to prevent their

running into other Sects, at last to Quakerism.

Answ. 1. In the mean time you commit a gross sin, the sin of Schism, by breaking the union of the Church without sufficient cause; and that to come at an uncertain good, contrary to the rule, *Rom.* 3. 8.

2. Separation is the way to make Quakers, as our experience hath proved, rather than to prevent Quakerism.

3. You grieve and wrong the legal Minister, by scattering his flock, undermining his reputation with the people, weakning his maintenance, as well as the maintenance of all Parish-Officers: This was your complaint heretofore against the Independents.

4. You wrong the people you comply with more, by joyning with them in their sin of Separation, than you can do them good. 1. By tacitly consenting to their needless scruples, which you know to be so, and thereby become accessary to the weakness of their consciences, and superstition that followeth upon it. 2. You train up the people to a dislike of

of publick Authority by your example, and ſo feed the humour of breaking the Fifth Commandment, and teach the young man to lift up himſelf above the Ancient, and the vile above the Honourable; as they have moſt ſhamefully done for thirty years laſt paſt. 3. You train them up in ſpiritual pride, juſtifying themſelves that they are righteous, and condemning others.

5. By this practice you harden all the Sects in their way, and make all hopes of any ſetled Government, even in your own way, deſperate.

6. This ſeparation tendeth to Atheiſm, inſtead of Reformation: people ſeeing ſo many new unheard of ways in Religion, and all the ſeveral parties crying out to the people, Lo here is Chriſt; Thouſands of the people conclude, there is nothing certain in Religion, and neglect all.

7. To deter you from ſeparating from the Pariſh-Churches, to come at a purer communion, let me put you in mind of a conſiderable ſaying of Mr. *Baxter*'s to the old Separatiſts, 'It is very remarkable, ſaith he, that it is a pretence of Baxter. *Ep. to Separat. Congr.*

'our impurity, and a greater purity with
'you, that is pleaded by thoſe that firſt
'turn over to you. And that this height
'of all Impieties, ſaith he, ſhould be the
'uſual iſſue of a way pretended ſo exact
'and clean; doubtleſs it is none of God's
'mind by this to diſcourage any from
'purity and true Reformation, but to
'ſhew his deteſtation of that ſpiritual
'pride, which maketh men have too high
'thoughts of themſelves, and too much
'to contemn others, and to deſire to be
'further ſeparated from them, than God
'in the day of grace doth allow of. Con-
'ſider this, 'tis the judgment of ſome,
'that thouſands are gone to Hell, and
'ten thouſands upon their march thither,
'that in all probability had never come
'there, if they had not been tempted
'from the Pariſh-Churches, for the en-
'joyment of communion in a purer
'Church.

Argu-

Argument XI.

The Pariſh-Churches now, *are not as they were in the times when Presbyterians cryed out of gathering Churches out of them: Therefore their ſayings to the Separatiſts* then, *ought not to be reflected on, and urged againſt their practice* now; *for theſe Reaſons,* 1. *Becauſe the Pariſh-Churches* then, *impoſed nothing upon the Miniſter or people contrary to the Word of God,* now they do. 2. *Becauſe the Pariſh-Churches then were reformable, now they have covenanted againſt Reformation.* 3. *The Pariſh Churches then had proper Paſtors, that had the power of the keys of Government, not ſo now.* 4. *Becauſe in the Pariſh Churches now, the Presbyterian Miniſters are forbidden to preach, and the people to have the Sacrament, or their children to be baptized, un-*

leſs they will ſay and do ſuch things as they dare not do, for fear of God's diſpleaſure. The Pariſh-Churches then drove none ſuch away from Miniſtry and Communion.

Inſinuation I.

'Tis inſinuated, the Pariſh-Churches in Presbyterian days, impoſed nothing contrary to the Word of God, either upon Miniſter or People, but now they do.

Anſw. 1. THe Pariſh-Churches cannot juſtly be charged with impoſing any thing at all, either upon Miniſter or people, much leſs impoſing any thing contrary to the Word of God; becauſe they ſtand in the capacity of Subjects not Legiſlators.

2. *WHAT* is it that is impoſed? *Firſt*, upon the *Pariſh CHURCH-MEMBERS*, contrary to the Word of God, there is not any one thing inſtanced in, and it is judged impoſſible for any one to prove *one ſuch* thing. Mr. *Baxter* communicateth with ſome of the Pariſh-Churches,

Baxter's *Defence of the principles of love*, p. 38.

Churches, both in the Word, Prayer and Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and telleth us, that divers Learned Nonconformiſt Miniſters in 1663. at a Conference concluded it lawful ſo to do: Which they would never have done, if they had thought any thing impoſed on private perſons contrary to the Word of God.

3. Now concerning the *PARISH-MINISTERS*, what is impoſed on them contrary to the Word of God, the Objector doth not inſtance in any one thing. The Conforming Miniſters themſelves think no ſuch thing of the Impoſitions upon them; if they did, in charity we are bound to believe they would never conform to them; knowing multitudes of them as tender conſcienced as any, by their general courſe of life.

4. Let it be ſeriouſly conſidered, in the fear of God, whether the Pariſh-Miniſters and Churches in 1643. taking the Scotch Covenant to root out the Government eſtabliſhed by Law, confirmed by many Acts of Parliament, and contrary to the King's publick Declaration of his diſlike of it, and prohibition of his Subjects to take it: Whether did not this

Act render the ſtate of the Pariſh-Miniſters and Churches, more obnoxious to exception, as to the point of communion with them, than any thing can be urged againſt the Pariſh-Churches and Miniſters *now*, that live in charity among themſelves, and in obedience to their Governors and Laws, eſpecially conſidering multitudes of the Pariſh-Miniſters themſelves, that ventured upon this dangerous Oath, were firſt under the Oath of Allegiance to the King, the Oath of Supremacy, and the Oath of Canonical obedience to the Biſhops.

Inſinuation II.

The Pariſh-Churches in Presbyterian days were reformable in that wherein they needed Reformation; But now they have covenanted againſt Reformation.

Anſw. 1. TRue, the Pariſh-Churches *then* wanted Reformation, but never like to be reformed in the Presbyterian way to the end of the world. 1. Becauſe the Independents, men of great fame and intereſt, all manner of ways obſtructed it. 2. Becauſe Presbyterian Examination by

by a new ſort of Church-Officers, called Lay-Elders, before receiving the Lord's Supper, was *intolerable* to the people. 3. Becauſe the Parliament would never be brought to grant the Presbyteries that power which they thought neceſſary to go through with the work: For which reaſons the work never proceeded to any purpoſe, nor never like to proceed to the end of the world. So that in a hurry the old Government was pulled down, and none ever after like to be ſet up in the room of it, but every man left to do what is right in his own eyes. So that as King *James* his Aphoriſm proved true, *No Biſhop, no King*; ſo this alſo, *No Biſhop in* England, *no National Church Government in* England. *Parliam. Declar. April 17. 1646.*

2. Whereas it is inſinuated that the Pariſh-Churches have Covenanted againſt Reformation, and not to ſay when and wherein, is undoubtedly to inſinuate hard things againſt the Pariſh-Churches, and upon very hard terms. They know no ſuch thing.

3. We know no Covenant againſt Reformation that ever was propounded to the Churches, much leſs taken by them. The People of the Pariſh-Churches are under

under no other Covenant now than they were in Presbyterian days, that any body knoweth of.

4. 'Tis true, the *Miniſters* in the Long Parliament days, having been ſo unhappy, as by Sermons in the Pulpits, and Speeches at *Guild-Hall*, to have too great a hand in the Wars; and having bound themſelves by an Oath to perſevere in their endeavours to root out Prelacy, which the preſent Parliament hath thought fit to reſtore; and the King alſo to take an Oath at his Coronation to maintain, as his Anceſtors had done before him: The King and Parliament ſince their Reſtoration, have not thought fit to admit any man into the Publick-Miniſtry, without firſt giving ſecurity for his keeping the peace both in the Church and State for the future, that we may have no more ſuch bloody Wars, neither Eccleſiaſtical nor Civil. This is the true meaning of all the Miniſters covenanting that now enter into the Miniſtry, and the only occaſion of all the extraordinary Impoſitions upon them.

Now in my humble opinion, the late publick Miniſters inſtead of quarrelling with Superiours for theſe new Impoſitions,

ons, ſhould rather quarrel with themſelves, for giving ſo great and ſo juſt an occaſion for them: And if they would agree to publiſh their Retractations and Repentances, as Mr. *Baxter* hath given them an Example, there would be little need of continuing theſe fetters any longer.

Baxter's *ſecond admonition to Bagſhaw. p.* 51, 52.

Now as for the preſent Pariſh-Miniſters, in what they do when they enter the Miniſtry; they are ſo far from thinking they Covenant againſt Reformation, that they think they Covenant only againſt Schiſm, Sedition and Rebellion. But whether they think right, or whether they think wrong, what is this to the poor Pariſh-Churches? do the Pariſh-Churches deſerve to be demoliſht, and cut into ſhreds for this, which bad ſervice ſeparation doth them; as Mr. *Baxter* and the *London*-Miniſters, and the reaſon of the thing telleth us.

Inſinu-

Insinuation III.

The Pastors of the Parish-Churches in the Presbyterian days had the Power of the Keys of Government: 'Tis not so now: They were true Churches, and did own themselves for such.

Answ. 1. THE Parish-Churches were then, no doubt, true Churches; and so they are now as well as then. They did own themselves for such *then*, and so they do *now*; and will be owned by all Protestants for such, except Brownists and Anabaptists. Herein there is no difference at all between the Parish-Churches *then* and *now*. Mr. *Baxter* himself owneth the Parish-Churches *now* for true Churches, by holding full Communion with them, and exhorting others to do so too; and for their encouragement insinuateth the terms of Communion to Lay persons to be more acceptable *now* than in the days of former Bishops; and therefore in his judgment there can be no such difference in the state of the Parish-Churches *then* and *now*, as to justifie separation from them

Object.

Object. But the Paſtors in the Presbyterian days had the power of the *Keys* of *Government*: not ſo *now*.

Anſw. 1. This cannot be truly ſaid of the Paſtors of the Pariſh-Churches, That they have no power of the Keys. The Law calleth them Rectors; and in Ordination the Keys are committed to them. And by the Rubrick and Canons every Pariſh-Paſtor is commanded to uſe the Keys of Government, by ſuſpending ſcandalous perſons from the Lord's Supper; ſo that they ſin if they do not govern: Yea, 'tis plain, the Pariſh-Paſtor doth exerciſe a true ſpiritual Government over the Flock, as the Captain doth in fight when he goeth before his Soldiers, and leadeth them on and off. He governeth them by a Paſtoral Government, while he guideth them in Doctrine, Prayer, and Sacraments. Every Pariſh-Miniſter participateth of the three Offices of Chriſt, *Kingly*, *Prieſtly*, and *Prophetical*; and every Pariſh-Church is a true political Society: That which cannot be ſaid of any Independent Church in the world. The Pariſh-Churches have *pars regens*, and *pars ſubdita*, ſo can no Independent Church ſay, becauſe of their popular

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Government, which maketh them rather take the name of *Lumps* than *Bodies*.

And though every Miniſter participate of the three Offices of Chriſt, the exerciſe may be ſo diſtributed among the Paſtors in a fixed Eccleſiaſtical State, that one ſhall do more of the Teaching part, another more of the Ruling part, upon grounds of prudence, yet the ruling part is not wholly taken out of their hands. This is the caſe of our Pariſh-Paſtors; and the truth is, the Law for carrying the rugged part of Diſcipline out of the hands of the particular Paſtor, into a Court eſtabliſhed by Law for that purpoſe, ought not to be reckoned a degrading of the Paſtor of one part of his Office, but a regulating them rather for the general good in the execution of their Office: it taketh off a load of envy from the particular Paſtor, which otherwiſe would lye upon him, if he ſhould have the ſole management of ſo diſtaſtful a work.

2. If it be well conſidered, you may perhaps conclude, that the particular Paſtors have as much power of the Keys of Government as is for the general good: That particular Paſtors ſhould have a power to deprive Members of choice ſpiritual

ritual priviledges, without controul, if they do amiſs, were Tyranny rather than Government. *Calvin* concludeth thus: 'I never thought it uſeful, ſaith he, to 'commit the power of *Excommunication* 'to every Paſtor: for it is an *odious* thing, 'and an example not to be approved, and 'which would ſoon ſlip into Tyranny. Calv. *Ep. ad Gaſp. Lizetum.*

3. 'Diſcipline, ſaith Mr. *Herle*, ſo li-'able to *contempt*, needs the help of *Ma-'jeſty*, *Authority*, *Reverence*, to make it 'terrible as an Army with Banners. Now the poverty of *Purſe*, *Parts*, and *Youth*, of the greateſt part of Pariſh-Paſtors, to ſay nothing of the unruly paſſions, and undue prejudices, that private perſons are ſubject to on the one hand, and the *age*, *ſtubbornneſs*, *wealth*, *honour*, *learning* and *parts* of many of the people, who yet deſerve Diſcipline, on the other hand, make Diſcipline with honour and ſucceſs utterly impracticable by moſt particular Paſtors in *England*.' Tis therefore remarkable that when the Brethren had got the Keys by violence out of the hands of the Biſhops into their own, neither Presbyterians nor Independents knew what to do with them, but to lay them by them; they have either totally neglected to uſe them, which was gene-

rally

rally the case of almost all the resbyterians in *England*, or else fallen under the temptations of throwing them into the Body of the common people, which all Congregational-men do.

Baxter's *Preface to Reformed Pastor.*

4. To come close then; If the Parish-Pastors in Presbyterian days had the Keys of Government, what were the Churches *then* the better, if they never used them? they generally settled in the neglect of them, and not only so, but argued against the use of them (at that time) as if all things considered it were better to let them alone, which Mr. *Baxter* lamentably complaineth of, and sharply reproveth in these words: 'Will you wait till 'you are dead, and leave it as a part of 'your Epitaph to posterity, that you so 'deeply engaged, and *contended* for that 'which you so abhorred to the death, that 'you would never be brought to the pra-'ctice of it? He telleth them the people had seen their Government in Paper, but not in Actions; that they had heard them talk much of *Government*, but had never seen the thing: and asketh his Brethren whether they can think that the people will be satisfied with the empty sound of the word *CHURCH-GOVERNMENT?* with abundance more to this effect.

Reformed Pastor, p. 218. 222.

p 221.

If

If it be thus, the Pariſh-Churches *then* were in no better condition in this reſpect than ours now; nor ſo good neither: And if ſeparation by gathering Churches out of them were a ſin *then*, 'tis ſo now. And here by the way, let the Brethren think, 1. What work they have made for Repentance and Reſtitution, that raſhly ſwore to root out their lawful Governours the Biſhops, and did it, both in reſpect of their dignities and properties, to come at *Diſcipline*; And when they had done, were forced to feed the people with two words, *Government* and *Diſcipline*; but could not let them ſee the thing, becauſe in Truth, they found it impracticable in *England*, in the Presbyterian way, which the Epiſcopal party was always wont to ſay. 2. The Brethren, in all reaſon and good Conſcience, ought to accept of a ſober Admonition, to refrain their preſent practice of gathering Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches, to come at Diſcipline; becauſe upon tryal it hath once already proved a deceitful pretence.

5. Our new Separatiſts from the Pariſh-Churches for want of Diſcipline, are [illegible] more unlike to uſe Diſcipline *NOW*,

than ever they were, when they ſo neglected it; becauſe then they were not under hatches as now. Their maintenance then was not precarious as now. And Mr. *Baxter* lately hath told us plainly, That the people of the new Separation, inſtead of being ruled by their Paſtors, they ſo much rule their Paſtors, that many of them have been forced to forſake their own Judgments, to comply with the violent. What likelihood then is there of exerciſing diſcipline upon ſuch a head ſtrong unruly multitude?

Baxter's Cure, p. 395.

6. And laſtly, let the Brethren weigh, what one of the moſt Learned Presbyterians hath ſaid, and they will never ſeparate upon this account.

Second Diſcourſe of the Religion of England, p. 41.

If the higher powers will not admit of ſuch a form, this may ſatisfie the Subject's Conſcience, That Eccleſiaſtical Government is neceſſarily more directed and ordered in the exerciſe thereof, by the determination of the Civil Magiſtrate, in places where the true Religion is maintained, than where perſecuted: They that have received the power, muſt anſwer to God for it: They that are diſcharged from it, ſhall never anſwer for that of which they are bereaved.

Inſinu-

Inſinuation IV.

The Presbyterian Miniſters are forbidden to Preach, and the People to have the Sacraments, or their Children to be Baptized, unleſs they will ſay and do ſuch things as they dare not do, for fear of diſpleaſing God: But in the Presbyterian days, the Pariſh-Churches then drove none ſuch away from Miniſtry and Communion.

1. THE Pariſh-Churches do not own themſelves to ſtand Independent, and to have the power of making Laws for Miniſter and People within themſelves: They therefore bid nor forbid any thing relating either to Miniſter or People, but according to the direction of the Law-Givers. *Anſwi*

The plain Truth is this, the Presbyterian Miniſters not accepting the terms of the publick Eſtabliſhment, become ſilenced by the *LAWS*, not the *People* of the Pariſh-Churches, who are ſorry at their Hearts, that the Miniſters ever gave the Supreme Authority cauſe to make ſuch ſevere Laws, and many of them are

ſorry that ever there were any ſuch Laws made.

2. Though the Presbyterian Miniſters are not there, the ſame Goſpel is preached there by others; no Papiſts, but Proteſtants, of the ſame Chriſtian Faith and Religion, and approved by Authority.

3. As faſt as any of the Presbyterians become convinced of the lawfulneſs of ſubmitting to the publick Laws, and deſire imployment in the Church, they are embraced, as many have done, and ſome of them of the moſt Learned, Pious and Judicious amongſt them.

4. If any remain unſatisfied, and by that means unimployed, doth it therefore follow, that 'tis lawful to cut the Church into ſhreds by Separation, and demoliſh it, as Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, Separation doth?

5. The old Nonconformiſts complain'd bitterly of ſome of their Company in their days, that having leap'd out of the Surpl[illegible] could not keep them from leaping [illegible] the Church too, by ſeparat[illegible] diſtinct Congregations.

But

But the moſt ſober of them did diſtinguiſh between bare Non-conformity to every thing done in the Pariſhes, and gathering Churches out of them into diſtinct Congregations, under a diſtinct Government. They were as great Enemies to this practice as any, as appeareth by their Writings againſt the [illegible] Separatiſts: [illegible] between Separation [illegible] Church, by purging it, and Separation *From* the Church, by departing from it.

6. Whereas 'tis ſaid, *In the Presbyterian days, the Pariſh-Churches drove none ſuch away from Miniſtry and Communion, that through fear of diſpleaſing God, durſt not conform to the way of the Pariſh Churches.* To this it is anſwered,

1. The Pariſh-Churches then ſet up *Lay-Elders*; concluded them Church-Officers by Divine Law; ſuffered no man to receive the Lord's Supper, that would not be examined by them; which drove people from the Sacrament, that they never received it all their life after. And Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, Setting up Lay-Elders was a piece of Superſtition.

the Parish Churches drove away, the governing power did then drive many excellent Ministers and Scholars, both out of their Ministry and Livings too, by Sequestrations, and into Gaols and Prisons, to the utter ruine of Thousands, for not taking the Scotch-Covenant, and such like Obligations, which they could no more do with a good Conscience, than cut their Neighbours Throat.

3. The Independents on the other hand, durst not conform to the Presbyterian way, for fear of displeasing God, that's plain, in that they reckon their own way to be *Jure Divino*: But for all that, the Presbyterians did not think it fit to gratifie their erroneous Consciences so far, as to suffer them to gather Churches out of the Parish-Churches, into distinct Congregations, if they could have got power to hinder it. They did what they could to hinder it, they fasted, prayed, and writ against it: 'Independency a great Schism, saith Mr *Cawdrey*: They Remonstrate and Petition the Parliament against it; They preach Sermon after Sermon to the Parliament, crying out of it, and thirsted for power to suppress it.

4. 'Tis

4. 'Tis well known, the moſt ſolid of the Presbyterians are for the National Church way; they are for a governing Church over all the particular Churches and Miniſters, and as much for order and uniformity to publick Eccleſiaſtical Laws, as any, and as ſevere upon the point of order, and far more, than ever the Biſhops were. The Presbyterians by principle, are ſo far from ſuffering Diſſenters from their Parish-Churches, to gather Churches out of them, into diſtinct Congregations, under a diſtinct Government, that the Scotch Miniſters cannot endure ſo much as the meeting of divers families together, for family-worſhip among them; and give this reaſon for it, That it tendeth to the prejudice of the publick Miniſtery, and Schiſm in the Church; and therefore give this in charge, *At family Worſhip, a ſpecial care is to be had*, ſay they, *that each family keep by themſelves.* This counſel of theirs our Presbyterian Aſſembly thought fit to prefix before their larger Catechiſm; which ſheweth they approved it. I have now anſwered the four Inſinuations of difference, between the ſtate of the Pariſh-Churches now, and their ſtate in Presbyterian days: And by what I have

Jus divin. Miniſter. Anglic. ivine Right of Presbyter.

Scots preface to the Aſſembly Catechiſ.

ſaid, I conceive it appeareth evidently, that there is no ſubſtantial difference between the ſtate of the Pariſh-Churches now, and their ſtate in the long Parliament days, wherefore to juſtifie their ſeparation from them: ſo that whatever the Presbyterians ſaid *then*, of the *Schiſm* and ſin of gathering Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches, will fall *heavy* upon themſelves, if they ſhall do, as others did before them; nay far heavier, becauſe the ſtate of the Pariſh-Churches in *England*, ſince the Re-eſtabliſhment of Epiſcopacy, hath been much better than before *in many reſpects*: Becauſe, 1. Now we have cauſe to hope, there are not many Pariſh-Churches (though the Means be ſmall) but the means of ſaving faith and knowledge are there; becauſe there are the holy Scriptures read, there are the Prayers of the Church, there are the Articles of Faith, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, Pſalms, Sacraments and Homilies, if not other Sermons: But in the long Parliament days, after the Biſhops and Liturgy were gone, now generally in the places of very ſmall Means, the Church doors have been ſhut up, and, as is ſaid, all publick worſhip of God, for a conſiderable time together ceaſed, and the people

deſi-

delivered up as a prey to all ſorts of Hereticks and Deceivers. 2. In the beſt places, the loſs of the *Liturgy* was undoubtedly a great loſs to the Church, becauſe it condeſcendeth to the weakneſs of the weak, which the *ex tempore* prayers of moſt Miniſters do not; and then too, becauſe of the unruly paſſions, prejudices, errors and other infirmities of Miniſters of divided parties, the diſuſe of the Lord's Prayer, the non-repeating of the *Creed*, *Ten Commandments*, the not calling the people to make publick Confeſſion of their faith, the ſlighting of Infant Baptiſm, the total neglect of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in many places, rendred the ſtate of the Pariſh-Churches deplorable then. But now by the advantage of a publick Eſtabliſhment, the Pariſh-Churches are every day growing into a better condition. What then will be the ſin and evil of thoſe men, that inſtead of repenting of former raſhneſſes, will *ſet their hand again to the ſame Church-ruining work*.

Argu-

Argument XII.

We must distinguish between tolerable and intolerable Ministers. In some of the Parish Churches the Minister is intolerable, and not fit to be a Minister; and for this cause 'tis lawful to gather Churches.

Answ. 1. WHat think you of *Hophni* and *Phineas*, the two sons of *Eli*, they were for their prophaneness intolerable Ministers: They were sons of *Belial*, that knew not the Lord, and yet no separation from them as Priests, justifiable. The people that began to abhor the Ordinances upon their account, are called transgressors, 1 *Sam.* 2. 24. as hath been noted once before: so that though they were intolerable before God, as to their own persons, and therefore ought to have been excluded: They were tolerable before the Church, as to Church-Administration, so long as they enjoyed the Priests Office, and not legally ejected. What think you of the Scribes and Pharisees, that *said* and *did* not, whose conversation

verſation Chriſt himſelf telleth us was a perfect contradiction to their doctrine: ſurely ſuch are intolerable Miniſters before God; but as to the peoples communicating with ſuch in Church-Adminiſtrations, they were tolerable; for Chriſt commandeth his own Diſciples to communicate with them, *Matth.* 23. 2. the reaſon is this, becauſe order muſt be kept, and the bleſſing of Ordinances dependeth not upon the goodneſs of the Adminiſtrators, but the bleſſing of the Inſtitutor. 'In one word, ſaith Mr. *Baxter*, 'the Church is bound to take many 'a man as a true Miniſter to them, and 'receive the Ordinances from him in 'faith and expectation of a bleſſing, upon 'promiſe, who yet before God is a ſinful 'Invader, an Uſurper of the Miniſtry, 'and ſhall be condemned for it. *Church-Government, p. 131.*

But 2. By the Eccleſiaſtical Law, no man entreth the Miniſtry in the Church of *England*, whoſe abilities are not firſt tryed by Learned men, able to judge of mens fitneſs, who ſubſcribe not to the Book of Articles, and of whoſe holy and ſober converſation, ſatisfaction is not firſt received. In caſe any Miniſter prove otherwiſe, and become intolerable, the people ought not to *right* them-

themſelves by Separation, but in *a legal way*, by the aſſiſtance of lawful Authority; becauſe otherwiſe, if the people once get head, break looſe from the reins of Government, and turn Reformers, the Remedy, in reſpect of the publick, will be worſe than the diſeaſe, to a particular Pariſh. 'Tis to deſpile Government, break order, introduce Anarchy, the lamentable conſequence whereof, *England* hath found by woful experience, and 'tis to be wiſhed it may be a warning to all Engliſh Subjects for the future, to take heed of all diſorderly motions and proceedings.

3. Intolerable Miniſters, whether by hereſie or prophaneneſs, on complaint made, and ſufficient proof, cannot continue in their places, and therefore there will be no need of Separation upon this account. The Biſhops lately have turned out divers for ſcandal, and are very ſevere in the point, and reſolve to be more ſo.

4. The common people, except in ſome notorious caſe of debauchery and prophaneneſs, are no competent Judges who are tolerable, and who are intolerable; but leſs able to judge now than ever,

ever, becauſe upon diſturbing our fixed State Eccleſiaſtical, and breaking the hedge of Government, a Serpent hath bit us, I mean, the Devil took his opportunity, and fill'd the Nation with Hereticks and Impoſtors, ſo that the peoples heads are fill'd with odd notions, mad opinions, and hair-brain'd fancies, all over *England*. Mr. *Edwards* telleth us, that in a ſhort time 180 errours *appeared amongſt us*: Mr. *Caſe* telleth the Parliament, That the *errours in the Biſhops days, were but tolerable trifles, but now*, ſaith he, *the Nation is filled with doctrines of Devils*. To this effect, Mr. *Pool*, Mr. *Cranford*, and Mr. *Manton* tell us, that in the Biſhops days, *Errours walked in the dark: But now, ſay they*, cum privilegio, *for the more ſpeedy corrupting the people*. Sixty and odd Miniſters of the City of *London*, joyn in an Exhortation to their people, and tell them, That horrid and hideous errours had for ſome years paſt abounded amongſt us againſt Scriptures, Deity of Chriſt, Holy Ghoſt, Trinity, Immortality of the Soul, Reſurrection of the Dead, Heaven and Hell, decrying and abuſing Ordinances, as ſo many empty forms; that the truths of Chriſtianity were in danger of being buried under the heap

In an Epiſt. to Mr. Pool's Book for the Deity of the Holy Ghoſt. 1660.

and

and rubbish of all sorts of errors: This the Church got by turning out the Bishops. Now whilst the Nation is thus infected, 'tis impossible the common people should be able to make judgment of the tolerableness or intolerableness of Ministers: Persons will now be judged tolerable or intolerable, not according to the reason of the thing, but as they either hit or miss particular *by*-opinions taken up by divided parties.

5. If it be the duty of every individual member of the Church, to sit in judgment of the tolerableness and intolerableness of the legal Ministers; and if judged intolerable, then to separate into a new Church, what can follow upon this practice, but Separation upon Separation to the end of the World, and that from one end of the Nation to the other? For there is no man, though never so worthy, but by some silly and erroneous persons will be thought intolerable. In my humble opinion, instead of feeding the wanton humour of Separation, by such Insinuations as these, it were better for the poor people to hear the wise counsel of *Solomon*, against self-confidence, *Prov.* 3. 6. and *Paul* the Apostle's counsel to the Church-members at *Rome*,

Rome, againſt ſelf-conceit, *Rom.* 12. 16. and that every man would think ſoberly of himſelf: it were better for the common people to hear of modeſty, poverty of Spirit, the duty of humility, and how improbable it is for them to make ſo true and ſo good a judgment for themſelves, as their lawful Governours, in ſuch a ſetled Church as ours is, than to be ſuppoſed able and fit to judge their Miniſters and Judges. 'Tis impoſſible we ſhould ever be happy, till the people have learned to think more meanly of themſelves, and more honourably of their Governours, as Mr. *Baxter* hath often told us.

Argument XIII.

Some Pariſh Churches about London *are grown too numerous, that all cannot come to the Pariſh-Churches; therefore*, &c.

1. WHere lieth the reaſon of the practical inference of the Brethren, from theſe premiſes: Some Pariſh-Churches about *London*, cannot con-

tain

tain their members; Therefore Nonconformists may lawfully gather Churches all *England* over. 'Tis well known, they that gather Churches, out of the Parish-Churches, have no regard to any of these circumstances, but gather them out of the Parish-Churches, and practise the Sacraments among them where ever they are: and by some it is observed, that for the most part they gather Churches in great Cities, where there is no need.

2. Where the case of any Parish is such, the people should be taught to remonstrate their case to lawful Authority, that Tabernacles may be built, as hath been in divers places in the City, since the Fire, till a way can be found for building more Churches or Chappels, and also to appoint them some pious, peaceable, orthodox Ministers to officiate; which would be presently granted. This is God's way, because orderly: The other way, is tumultuous, and tendeth to sedition, and to practise without all reverence of Authority, and as if we did not look upon our selves as members of an established Church, but as a company of scattered Christians in a Pagan Country.

3. 'Till

3. 'Till Tabernacles can be built, there are neighbouring Churches capable of more than their own Pariſhes, to which they may reſort.

4. The Pariſh-Churches now that are ſo numerous, were ſo too when Presbyterians cryed out of gathering Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches by the Independents: Beſides the Plague in 1665. hath deſtroyed many thouſands ſince; therefore this is no Argument to juſtifie Separation now, no more than it was in thoſe days.

Argument XIV.

That the Conformists in the publick Temples are not enough to preach to the people, and defend them from Popery: Non-Conformists therefore ought to help, and 'tis their duty, though they gather Churches: And the Parish-bounds are not of Divine Institution.

Answ. 1. WHether the publick Ministers be enough to carry on the publick Services, or not enough, is a matter proper for the consideration and judgment of the governing Church, into whose hands the Law hath put such trusts; not proper for private persons, further than to remonstrate and petition: If private persons shall presume to make themselves Judges in matters of publick cognizance, and practise upon their own judgment, contrary to the publick Laws, in such a setled Church as the Church of *England* is: 'Tis impossible for such persons to pass without censure of turbulent.

bulent. Mr. *Cawdry* telleth Dr. *Owen* of a caſe like this, and ſaith, 'Tis an Ana-'baptiſtical *Munſter*-principle at the 'bottom. *Independency a great Schiſm.* p. 190.

2. Whereas 'tis ſaid, the Pariſh-bounds are not of *divine Inſtitution.* I anſwer, 'Tis true they are not of *divine Inſtitution* (in *totidem verbis*) they are no where particularly inſtituted in the New Teſtament: But they are of divine Inſtitution, as the Laws of Nature are divine, and as they are contained in the general Rules of the Word, where there are no particular Rules in the caſe, 1 *Cor.* 14. *Let all things be done decently, orderly, and for edification:* Which is impoſſible to do in ſuch a great Nation of Chriſtian Profeſſors as *England* is, if the whole be not put into parts, under particular Paſtors; as the General of an Army putteth his Souldiers: and alſo if the parts offer to break their Ranks, and refuſe to keep their proper places and ſtations appointed by Authority: As they do with a witneſs, that forſaking their own *Miniſter* and neighbourhood, to whoſe conduct and communion God's Providence and the Laws of the Land have committed them, take the boldneſs to ſettle themſelves in a ſtated way of Church-

Communion with others, ſcattered here and there, without any regard to Governours or the Government.

3. Whereas 'tis ſaid, the people want the help of more Miniſters than Conformiſts, to defend them from Popery, and for this Nonconformiſts may gather Churches:

Anſw. 1. This Separation Mr. *Baxter* and the *London*-Miniſters tell us ſcattereth the Members, and cutteth the Church into ſhreds; what offence or defence can the Church in ſuch a ſhattered condition, make againſt an Adverſary? The ſtrength of a Church in every Nation, as well as an Army, lieth in the union of the whole into one body, with ſome governing Church power over the whole: By virtue of which union, the whole, in all the parts, become capable of the ſuccouring influences of the *whole*, and without which union it is impoſſible: Theſe things are evident by the light of Nature, and the *ſafety* of the whole is concerned in the orderly motion of the parts, in their ſeveral places and ſtations: For a Nonconformiſt then to the publick Eſtabliſhment, to preſume to gather Churches out of the Pariſh-Churches,

Churches, what doth he but introduce Anarchy, and overthrow all Church-Government? which to do, is not to ſave the People from Popery, but to betray them to it.

In this I ſay nothing, but according to the ſence of a moſt judicious Presbyterian. In his ſecond Diſcourſe of the Religion of *England*, p. 44. ſpeaking of the conſiderate Nonconformiſt, he ſaith, 'They would rather help to bear up the 'preſent Eccleſiaſtical ſtate, than that '*Popery* ſhould break in by Anarchy, or 'the diſſolution of all Church-Govern-'ment. Again, 'An ample fixed ſtate 'Eccleſiaſtical, is neceſſary to uphold and 'increaſe the Religion, as well againſt 'infidelity, as againſt *Popery*. So that in the judgment of this Learned Author, to diſturb our fixed ſtate Eccleſiaſtical, which is done with a witneſs by diſorderly gathering Churches, and running into parties: This is the way to bring in Popery, and not to keep it out.

4. To ſcatter the Pariſh-Churches by Separation, is ſo far from affording help againſt Popery, that 'tis notoriouſly to proſecute the Jeſuits deſigns and councils for the reducing us to Popery, which is to do all they can to keep the Church

of *England* everlastingly in an unfixed state; there being nothing they dread so much, as our getting into order again: 'Our foundation, saith one of them, 'must be mutation, this will cause a re- 'laxation, which serveth as so many vio- 'lent diseases, as the Stone, Gout, to the 'speedy destruction, &c.

Prin's Introduct. p. 89.

Read Mr. Baxter's Key for Catholicks, p. 318.

Again, 'If the Puritans get the day, 'we shall make great advantage of it; 'for they will be unsetled, and all in 'pieces, and not know how to settle the 'Government.

Again, 'Factions and distractions give 'us footing for continual attempts. To 'make all sure, we will secretly have our 'party among the Puritans also, that we 'may be sure to maintain our interest, 'which way ever the world go.

Second Book of Politicks.

'Cherish their dissentions, saith *Adam Contren* the Jesuit, speaking of Protestants, 'and when all men see, there is 'nothing certain among them, the people 'will easily yield, meaning to Popery. To this purpose Mr. *Baxter* telleth us, 'That 'in a disguise they thrust themselves in- 'to all Sects and parties, not only Ana- 'baptists, and Independents are anima- 'ted by them, but they animate the Va- 'nists, Behmenists, and other Enthusiasts, 'the Seekers, the Quakers, the Origenists,

The last Direction.

Key for Catholicks, p. 318.

'niſts, and all the Juglers and hiders of 'the times.

How then can it be adviſable for us, by multiplying ſeparate Meetings from the Pariſh-Churches, to make ſtill more Receptacles for the Jeſuits to play their pranks in.

5. And laſtly, There are not very many Miniſters that are fit to meddle much in the Popiſh Controverſies, either by diſputing or preaching, eſpecially in the private Meetings, that are ſo full of diſtractions and odd opinions. There is nothing pleaſeth a Learned Jeſuit better, than to hear ſome of the private Meeting Miniſters undertake to diſpute or preach againſt Popery; becauſe the moſt of them having more Confidence than Learning, and more heat than light, they will either miſtake the queſtion, or elſe through ignorance or prejudice, call that Popery which is not, or elſe charge them with that they are not guilty of, or at beſt make a weak defence: So that the Adverſary rather gaineth ground, than loſeth by ſuch oppoſitions.

When the Jeſuits get into one of the ſeparate Meetings, and hear them cry out of Epiſcopal Government and Ordi-

nation, as Popiſh and Antichriſtian, what ſport this maketh them, may eaſily be conceived, for that the Brethren themſelves are forced to confeſs that there was no other way of entring the Miniſtry for many hundred years.

Jus divin. Miniſter. Angl. p. 31.

Again, At other times to hear the Common-prayer Book reviled for Popiſh, and the Miniſters maintenance by Tythes Popiſh, and then the Pariſh bounds Popiſh, at laſt, Infant Baptiſm Popiſh and Antichriſtian: I ſay, it cannot be imagined what pleaſure it muſt be to the Adverſary, to find when Popery is oppoſed, thoſe things are condemned for Popery and Antichriſtian, which the whole Chriſtian world for many hundreds of years hath owned for unqueſtionable good things: and by this means inſtead of diſgracing the Pope, we put honour upon the Pope, as Mr. *Vines* the learned Presbyterian Miniſter once obſerved and ſaid, 'At this rate, ſaith he, of counting things 'Popiſh and Antichriſtian, we ſhall make 'the Pope and Antichriſt a brave fellow 'ſhortly, by making him the Author of 'ſo many good things.

Argu-

Argument XVI.

We are told of ſeparating from the Church of England, *but we do not know what the Church of* England *is, and why it ſhould not be as well Schiſm for the Pariſh Church Members not to frequent the Private-Churches, as for the private Separate Churches not to frequent them, we know not.*

1. OUR *New* Non-conformiſts are it ſeemeth come very near ſhaking hands with the old Browniſts: They indeed could not tell what the Church of *England* was, but the Old Non-conformiſts could tell; for notwithſtanding their Non-conformity, they owned the *Church of England* ſtill to be a True Church, in the ſame ſenſe with the Conformiſts; as appeareth by their Book againſt *Barrow* and others, wherein they ſay thus; 'The Church of *England* is a '*True Church of Chriſt*, and ſuch a one 'as whoſoever wittingly and willingly ſe-'parateth himſelf, cutteth himſelf from 'Chriſt.

Barrow, Greenwood.

Mr Rathband *every page.*

'Chriſt. They reckon their Ordination 'by Biſhops valid, the Oath of Canonical Obedience to them lawful; their Suſpenſions and Deprivations (if according to the Law of the Land) to be yielded to.

So long as the Biſhops ſuſpend and deprive according to the Law of the Land,

Page 41. 'We account of the action herein (ſay 'they) as the Act of the Church, which 'we may and ought to reverence and yield 'unto.

Jus divinum Miniſterii.p.14. The *London*-Miniſters alſo when they writ their Book called, *The Divine Right of the Miniſtry*, they did not think the Church of *England* ſuch a ſtrange thing, neither in name nor thing. They argue thus: If all the Churches in the World are called One Church, let no man be offended if all the Congregations in *England* be called *The Church of England.*

Q. But now it is made a queſtion, What is the *Church of England?*

Anſw. 1. Upon this occaſion, I would by the way admoniſh all honeſt men to take heed of entertaining the *firſt ſcruples* of conformity to the Church of *England*, becauſe men know not what will become of their ſcruples, nor where to make an end of them, to the unſpeakable damage of

of the Church and themſelves, and of the great intereſt of Chriſtian Religion in the main; inſomuch that if the queſtion were put ſince the Reformation, What fruit of them? it muſt be anſwered, *None*, but ſuch whereof we are aſhamed, even the lamentable decay of the moral part of Religion, ſtraining at Gnats, and ſwallowing Camels. This by the by.

Now for anſwer to the Queſtion.

Queſt. What is the Church of *England?*

Anſw. It is a Company of Chriſtian Profeſſors of Faith in Chriſt, inhabiting the *Engliſh* Nation, under one Civil Government by the Laws united into one Eccleſiaſtical Society (though parted into many Congregations) under a publick Miniſterial Church-governing-power over the whole, called the National Synod under the higheſt power. This is the Church of *England.*

And it is a true Political Society; there is the governing part, and the governed part; and both parts take the name of the Church, as it was in the Jewiſh Church; the governing part the *Sanhedrin*, as well as the governed part the *People*, both parts take the name of the Church. *Numb.* 35. 24. *comp. with Joſhua* 20. 4, 5, 6.

Church. And as in the Church of *Scotland*, the General Assembly take the name of the Church of *Scotland*; So in *England*, the *Synod* of *England* take the name of Church of *England*.

Mr. Rathband, p. 6. And Mr. *Rathband*, the old Nonconformist, telleth *Barrow* the Browniſt, who ſpake ſlightingly of the Church of *England*, as now the new Separatiſts do; I ſay he telleth them, That all the known Churches in the World acknowledge our Church, ſpeaking of the Church of *England*, for their Siſter. Further ſaith, That never any one Reformed Church made queſtion of it, that the womb of the Church of *England* bare the Queſtioniſts themſelves, and that her Paps gave them ſuck is well known; That it is a Church that hath brought forth, and brought up as many learned Men and good Chriſtians, as any Church in the World. And this hath been acknowledged by the learned men of other Churches.

Being thus we are furniſhed with a true meaſure for the judging of criminal Schiſm in *England*, and are helped to anſwer a new and an odd queſtion; Why it ſhould not as well be called Schiſm for the Pariſh-Church-Members, not to hold Communion with the ſeparate Aſſemblies, as it is called Schiſm in the ſeparate

Aſ-

Aſſemblies to with-draw from the Pariſh-Churches.

The Anſwer is this, Becauſe the Pariſh-Church-Members, by keeping to the Pariſh-Churches and Miniſtry, they keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; they maintain publick Charity; they obſerve publick Order according to the eſtabliſh'd Laws; they keep their ranks and hold their places, where the Law and right Reaſon hath fixed them. Theſe are therefore the only regular Aſſemblies.

As for the ſeparate Meetings of Churches gathered out of the Pariſh-Churches, they are like ſo many Mutineers in an Army, that break all publick Order, let go Charity, offer a publick affront to the Laws, diſturb our fixed Eccleſiaſtical State; and therefore are unlawful Aſſemblies, and not to be frequented, but avoided as the proper makers of diviſion. Neither is it poſſible for the Brethren that ſeparate upon the terms that they now practiſe it, to give us any definition of Schiſm, that either themſelves heretofore, or the Chriſtian-Church did ever account good: but it will ſtick as cloſe to them as the skin to their fleſh. Rom. 16. 17.

Object.

Object. But if it be objected, as I have heard it hath; They that give the cauſe make the Schiſm.

Anſw. I anſwer, The Brethren do not diſtinguiſh between the occaſion of a thing by ſome *Accident*, and the *real cauſe of a thing*. Though it ſhould be granted that Eccleſiaſtical Impoſitions, as conditions of Sacramental Communion, ſuch as the Croſs and Kneeling, through the weakneſs of People, may become an *occaſion*, it will never be proved that any Impoſitions are the real cauſe, except they could be proved to be ſomewhere or other forbidden in God's Word, and that as plainly as obedience to lawful Authority in lawful things is commanded in God's Word. This Mr. *Baxter* and many others have taught us: But for this no man of our new Separatiſts hath ever had the confidence to affirm; ſo that culpable Schiſm lieth upon all the ſeparate Congregations from the Church of *England* old and new.

Obj. That may be a Sin to one Man that is not ſo to another; To him that *thinketh* it a Sin to ſeparate from the Pariſh-Churches, it will be Sin, but to me it is no Sin.

Anſ.

Anſ. The Text referred to by the Objector concerneth the eating or not eating of *this* or *that* Meat, and the obſerving or not obſerving *days*, actions that in their own nature are neither good nor evil: And in reſpect of ſuch things, error of Conſcience in one man will make that unlawful to him that is not ſo to another.

But in reſpect of things *morally evil*, no error of Conſcience can make ſuch things *good* to any man which are in themſelves *evil*. Theft will be Theft, and Murther will be Murther, and Adultery, Adultery; and ſo Schiſm will be Schiſm, in the man that committeth theſe ſins: Let any man's private thinking of theſe things be what it will, no man's errour of Conſcience one way or other can alter the nature either of moral *good* or *evil*.

Argu-

Argument XVII.

To desert ones Ministry is not lawful; 'tis a piece of Sacriledge. We cannot preach except we have Hearers, we cannot have Hearers, but Members of some Parish-Churches: Therefore we must gather Churches.

Answ. 1. ST. *Austin* said, A man should not commit the least evil of sin to save all the damned from Hell: And St. *Paul* took it for a notorious slander in any man that reported him for one that said men may do evil that good may come. A good Christian is bound to do good though evil come to him for it, I mean the evil of Affliction. But the Christian Religion will suffer no man to commit the evil of sin, that good may come to himself or others by it. Now to gather Churches out of the Parish Churches, with which Communion may be held without sin, maketh men guilty of a most horrible Schism, because it is to separate without any sufficient cause: 'Tis to tear and rend a Church to pieces, and cut it into shreds only for personal richer Church-Priviledges, or se-

Rom. 3.8.

secular ends: 'Tis such a monstrous act of uncharitableness, that the new nature loatheth to think of it.

Now, that Communion may be held without sin in the Parish-Churches, the Brethren acknowledge it. Mr. *Baxter* himself practiseth it, and hath writ a Book to perswade the Brethren to it; and telleth us at a full meeting, The Ministers agreed it lawful and fit. *Cure of Church-Division.*

Now I would know then by what good authority this separating practice upon these terms can be justified from the guilt of the most horrible Schism that ever was heard of in the Christian World.

Object. But saith the Objector, To desert ones Ministry is not lawful, 'tis a point of Sacriledge.

Answ. 1. This argument is easily answered, by distinguishing upon the non-exercise of the Ministerial-Office.

'Tis one thing voluntarily to desert ones Ministry, by running to *another Calling* for *ease*, *profit*, *honour*, or *fear of persecution*. Another thing to suffer suspension of the present exercise of the Ministerial-Office, in a particular place, by the Laws of the Christian Church in the Land where a man liveth against ones

will. These are two things far and widely differing one from another.

To do the *first*, is a *Complication* of many vices, and is in plainness a wicked Sacrilege; and such men are not fit for the Kingdom of God.

But the second is the *Illustration* of four Cardinal Virtues, *Humility*, *Meekness*, *Self-denial*, *Obedience*. Some of the Virtues all men put off to too great a degree, when they put on separation from the Parish-Churches of *England*.

2. A man that suffereth suspension of the exercise of his Ministerial Office in a particular place by the Laws of the Land, in a state of the true Religion, doth not desert his Ministerial Office, because his Ministerial Office relateth in the first place to the *Catholick-Church*, in all the Countries of the World, as the Brethren have always urged against the Independents. So that if a Minister be suspended in one place, he may remove to another.

Suspension is not like Excommunication: If a man be legally excommunicated in one place, his Excommunication (if known) may and ought to be a Bar against his Communion with the Church all over the

the World, because Excommunication respecteth the Catholick Church, so doth not Suspension. The just reasons of Excommunication are the same all over the World, which is obstinate persisting in great transgressions of the general Precepts of the Gospel.

But Suspensions may be *just* in particular Countries; not only for Crimes, but for *not complying with publick Ecclesiastical Constitutions* for the Government and Discipline of the Church, and orderly and decent administration of the Ordinances, though through weakness of Judgment: The reason is this, because the *good* of *Order* in an Establish'd Church is greater to the Publick, than the use of particular men's gifts.

Calvin saith, 'Some orderly form ought 'chiefly to be observed in Churches which 'are best maintained by a well-fram'd dis- 'position of all things. And further, 'Be- 'cause of the great variety that is in mens '*Manners*, *Minds*, *Judgments*, *Wits*, No 'policy can be stedfast enough, unless it 'be established by certain Laws. He saith also, 'There must be an appointed Form, 'or no orderly usage can be observed. Further he saith, 'Without such Laws 'Churches

Calvin's *Instit.* p. 102.

'Churches are diſſolved from their ſinews, 'and utterly deformed and ſcattered a-'broad.

3. That ſuſpended Miniſters in the *Engliſh-Church*, for Non-conformity, ſhould acquieſce therein, was the judgment of the old Non-conformiſts. It hath been taken notice of already, *p.* 84. in anſwer to the Eighth Argument; by which every one may take notice how far the preſent Nonconformiſts are departed from the Judgments of the old Nonconformiſts, and gone into the way of Browniſts. By the way take notice what a dangerous ſlippery path the path of ſeparation from the Pariſh-Churches is.

4. And laſtly, to conclude, If there were any thing of Sacriledge in the caſe, it cannot lye upon the Miniſters that ſuffer Suſpenſion, becauſe to commit Sacriledge, is to be active in a thing, 'tis to be a practiſer of the evil of *ſin*; But to ſuffer a legal Suſpenſion is to be *paſſive*, 'tis to be a ſufferer of the evil of *affliction*.

If the Church ſuffer by the non-exerciſe of the Miniſterial-Office by ſuſpended Miniſters, in reaſon they muſt anſwer

swer for it that make the Laws; but they that by the Laws are bereaved of the opportunity, need never fear being charged with the duty.

I conclude with the saying of a judicious pious Non-conformist, in a Book called *The Second Discourse of the Religion of* England, p. 48.

'I do here solemnly profess, that I am 'chiefly sollicitous for the tranquillity 'and rest of a troubled Nation; as for my 'own concernment, my deprivation is an 'affliction to me: And I would do any 'thing that were not sin to me, to recover 'the liberty of my publick service in the 'Church: But if it cannot be, I submit to 'his good pleasure by whose determinate 'Counsel all things are brought to pass; 'and *am contented to remain a silenced sufferer* for Conscience towards God. Note this, That that which the Objector reckoned the sin of wicked Sacriledge, this learned Man, with the old Non-conformists reckoneth to be the duty of Christian Patience.

Second Discourse of the Religion of Eng. p. 48.

Again in another place, touched once 'before, 'An ample fixed State Eccles-'astical is necessary to uphold and increase

'true Religion, as well against Infidelity 'as against Popery: The loose part of 'the World would turn into a wearineſs, 'and contempt of divine Inſtitutions: 'And Chriſtianity it ſelf would be much 'endangered in a ſtate of *Anxiety* and *Un-'ſixedneſs*. By this the Reader may ſee how the preſent Church-confounding practice of the Brethren is condemned by one of themſelves. In his Judgment they are in the way of endangering, not only the Proteſtant Religion in *England*, but Chriſtianity it ſelf.

F I N I S.

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